A CRITIQUE OF A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA

K. P. SINHA

THE BOOK

In the present work, Prof. K. P. Sinha has made a attempt to refute almost all the objections raised by A.C Bhaktivedanta, the founder of ISKCON, in his works — *Śrī Caitanya–Caritāmṛta, Śrīmad Bhagavad–Gītā* an others — against the non-Vaiṣṇavite religious systems of India, particularly, against Advaita Vedānta. In the view of the present author, most of the objections raised by Bhaktivedanta are based on misinterpretations of the concepts of the systems taken for criticism. He has, therefore, ventured, in the present work, to point out those misinterpretations and to show the correct views of the relevant concepts of the systems concerned. He has, however, got nothing to say against Bhaktivedanta's views or interpretations of his own religion i.e. Śrī Caitanya's Vaiṣṇavism.

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PREFACE

Śrī Caitanya's religion marks the finest development of the cult of Vaiṣṇavism or indeed, of the path of devotion in India. And it is a matter of great joy that A. C. Bhaktivedanta, founder of the International Society of Krisna Consciousness, has taken this religion to every corner of the world and has practically established it as a world religion. This inspried me to study the works of Bhaktivedanta with keen interest and with deep reverence for him. But while going through his works, I had to stumble at every step on his misinterpretations of other systems and on his unkind remarks against them. Such misinterpretations and unkind remarks are really painful, since they tend to implant an uncatholic outlook in the hearts of the readers and to give rise to ill-feelings unnecessarily against other religious system.

We have, therefore, ventured to undertake the task of pointing out those misinterpretations and giving the correct viewa of the relevant concepts of the systems concerned, in the hope that my efforts may be able to remove, to some extent, the evil effects these misinterpretations and unkind remarks tend to create in the hearts of the readers of Bhaktivedanta's discourses. We are of the view that misinterpretations of other systems are uncalled for, since the acceptance of the real views of the system concerned will not, in any way, affect the worth of Śrī Caitanya's philosophy. The only thing required for synthesising the views of different religions is to accept the well-known maxim that 'men follow different paths of religion because of the difference in their 'ruci' or taste' and also the great saying of Sri Ramakrishna that 'all the systems are but different paths leading to the same goal—the Lord'.

In our present discourses, we are going to criticise only those views or remarks of Bhaktivedanta which, in our view, are based on misinterpretations of other systems and are marks of his disregard for them. We would not criticise his views on Śrī Caitanya's philosophy itself, for it must be admitted that there is little to say against them.

We are thankful to Sri Sankar Bhattacharya of Punthi Pustak who has taken interest in this work and published it within a short time.

Silchar
1st April 1997

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS = Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā
Ait = Aitareya
BG = Bhagavad-Gītā
BP = Bhāgavata-Purāṇa
Bṛ. = Bṛhadāraṇyaka
BV = Bhaktivedanta
CC = Caitanya-Garitāmṛta
Ch./Chānd. = Chāndogya
JS = Jayākhya-Saṁhitā
LT = Lakṣmī-Tantra
Nār. = Nārāyaṇīya
NPR = Nārada-Pañcarātra
Obs. = Observation
ṚV = Ṛg-Veda
SOK = Sword of Knowledge
Śvet. = Śvetāśvatara
Tait. = Taittirīya
Up. = Upaniṣad

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Religious tolerance is one of the greatest messages of Indian culture. From the earliest times till today, Indian sages have been propagating the great sermon that all religions lead men to the same goal—the Lord or the Highest Reality. By 'religion', of course, we mean 'paths that are prescribed for the realisation of the self or the Absolute Reality', and not those that have nothing to do with such realisation. Accordingly, the aforesaid view of the different paths of religion is not applicable to those systems which, in the name of religion, are confined only to some observances of external rites and ceremonies and are not concerned with the knowledge of the self or the Absolute. Except a few so-called religions of this sort, all religions endeavouring to lead men towards the knowledge of the self or the Absolute have been averred by the enlightened sages to be real paths taking men to that ultimate goal of life.

From very ancient times, Indian sages have certified four principal paths as capable of arousing in men the knowledge of the self or the Absolute. These four paths are : (1) *jñāna* or knowledge based mainly on mental speculation and meditation, (2) *yoga* based on mental and physical practices, (3) *karman* or action performed without an eye to the fruits, and (4) *bhakti* or devotion. The ideal set forth in the path of *jñāna* is the realisation of identity between the self and Brahman, that in the path of *yoga* is the realisation of the real nature of the self, that in the path of *karman* is the attainment of tranquillity of the mind in all actions and that in the path of *bhakti* is the attainment of the Lord in some personal form and maintenance of a sweet relation with Him.

It has been declared by the sages hundreds of times that the summum bonum of human life can be attained by pursuing any of these paths. The *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa, the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the Pāñcarātra works and all other fundamental treatises on religion without any exception hold the same view in this regard.

On the philosophical problem whether the Absolute or Brahman is *saguṇa* i. e. endowed with qualities or *nirguṇa* i. e. devoid of qualities, all the above-mentioned scriptures and treatises are consistent in holding that Brahman is both *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*. And on the problem whether Brahman is *sākāra* i. e. endowed with form or *nirākāra* i. e. devoid of form, these source-books consistently say that Brahman is both *sākāra* and *nirākāra*'. Again, on the problem whether the self is identical with Brahman or is different from it, these treatises uniformly subscribe to the views of both *abheda* or identity and *bheda* or difference i. e. the self and Brahman are considered both identical with each other and also mutually different. We also find a combination of these two views termed by the later thinkers as a theory of *bhedābheda* or difference-cum-non-difference.

From the religious point of view, Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Advaita-Vedānta, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism are the well-known traditional systems, and all these systems have been attested by the said scriptures and treatises as paths leading men to the said ultimate goal of life. Even the Tantric path pursued through sex, wine, meat etc. and looked upon by people in general to be dreadful is also acknowledged by the enlightened persons as a means for attaining the Absolute in the form of Śiva or the Universal Mother (see *Thoughts on Tantra and Vaiṣṇavism* by this author).

The question may arise : How can the same Absolute admit of such opposite natures as *sākāra* and *nirākāra* or *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* ? How can the same Reality be meditated upon as formless Brahman, and also be worshipped as Viṣṇu or Śiva or Kālī as well ? And, again, how can the same Brahman be both identical with the self and yet different from it ? In reply, it may be said in short that the Absolute reveals itself to the spiriturl aspirants in different forms and natures according to the *rucis* or tastes (*rucinām vaicitryāt*) of the aspirants. All these issues will be thoroughly discussed in the body of our present discourses.

It has to be noted, however, that when we say that all the religious paths lead the spiritual aspirants to the same goal or to the Lord or the Absolute, we do not mean that the attainments of all the aspirants are the same. For we are aware of that fact that though the same goal or the Absolute is attained by all, the nature of attainment and the bliss accruing from the attainment differ from person to person, because of the difference in the tastes of persons and in the paths pursued. Just as the same person may be enjoyed as friend or father or husband by different persons, so the same Absolute may be enjoyed differently by different aspirants in harmony with their tastes and the paths followed by them. Thus, the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* says : "Just as the same object endowed with different qualities is perceived differently by different, organs, so the same Lord can be realised differently by different scriptural paths" ("yathendriyaiḥ pṛthag-dvārair artho bahu-guṇāśrayaḥ, eko nāneyate tad-vad bhagavān śāstravartmabhiḥ"—BP 3.32.33 ; see Baladeva's comt. on *Laghubhāgavatāmṛta,* 206).

Now, though such a catholic attitude to different spiritual paths is displayed in the scriptures, there is a misguided parallel tradition in the religious systems of India to misinterpret other systems and undermine their values, For example though the systems of Buddha and Śaṅkara are quite in harmony with the Upanisadic philosophy, they have been interpreted by many to be heretic ones quite opposed to the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. Hence, in every epoch, the Lord announces—either through His incarnations or through the enlightened persons—the great sermon that all religions lead men but to the same goal, the Lord. In our present epoch, this great truth has been reiterated by the great sage Sri Ramakrishna through his sermon *'jata mat tata path'* meaning 'all religious systems are but different paths for attaining the one and the same Lord'. This great sage has proved the truth of this message in his own life through his realisation achieved by the pursnance of each aud every well-known path of religion.

Accordingly, we think that to undermine other systems by misinterpreting their theories is quite opposed to the tradition of India. Unfortunately. however, such a trend of misinterpreting other systems and undermining them is met with in abundance in the discourses of A.C. Bhaktivedanta, a leading personality in the religious field of the modern world. In the present work, we have, therefore, ventured to point out Bhaktivedanta's misinterpretations of other systems and to show the correct views of the systems concerned, with a view to wiping out any wrong idea that may arise in the minds of the readers of Bhaktivedanta's discourses.

To make the readers free from any doubt about Bhaktivedanta's we whe have, in this work, quoted his words simply as they are and have nowhere restated his views in our own language, Further, to convince the readers about our interpretations and observations, we have extensively quoted relevant passages from the original texts and have given English translations of those passages.

For the convence of treatment, we have divided the view of Bhaktivedanta into a few Sections. In each Section, we have, first, cited a number of passages from the works of Bhaktivedanta and, then, we have given our observations serially on those passages. Where a long discussion is demanded by the context, we have added long Notes at the bottom of the Section concerned.

ON THE VAISNAVITE VIEW OF THE ABSOLUTE AS A QUALIFIED PERSON

SECTION

1

ON THE VAISNAVITE VIEW OF THE ABSOLUTE AS A QUALIFIED PERSON

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Criticism of the Advaita-Vedāntic View on the Absolute as a Qualified Person.*

1. 'According to Vedānta philosophy, the Absolute Truth is a person. When the word *nirguṇa* (without qualites) is used, it is to be understood that the Lord has attributes that are totally spiritual"—*CC*, 2.25.54.

2. The impersonalists, who do not accept the transcendeatal form of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the demons, who are always engaged in blaspheming and fighting with Him, are punished by being merged into the Brahman effulgence. But that does not happen to the person engaged in the devotional service of the Lord".—*CC*, 2.6.265.

3. "The so-called Māyāvādī Vedāntis do not know who kṛṣṇa is; therefore their title of Vedāntī, or knower of Vedānta philosophy, is simply a pretension".—*CC*, 1.7.64.

4. "—When the Supreme Personality of Godhead is sometimes described as *nirākāra*, this is to indicate that He does not have a material body like us. Māyāvādī philosophers do not know how it is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is formless. The Supreme Lord does not have a form like ours but has a spiritual

from. Not knowing this, Māyāvādī philosophers simply advocate the onesided view that the Supreme Godhead, or Brahman, is formless (*nirākāra*)"—*CC*, 1. 7. 112.

5. "Thus many verses can be quoted from the Upaniṣads and Vedas which prove that the Supreme Godhead is not impersonal. ...From all these Vedic references one can understand that the Absolute Truth is a person, although no one can equal or excel Him. Although there are many foolish Māyāvādi philosophers who think that they are even greater than Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is *asamaūrdhva*, no one is equal to or above him"—*CC*, 1. 7. 112.

6. "Thus he (Sadānanda Yogīndra) consider anything other than pure knowledge to be material. The centre of ignorance is considered to be somtimes all-pervading and sometimes individual. Thus according to his opinion both the all-pervading Viṣṇu and the individual living entities are products of ignorance."—*CC*, 1.7.114.

7. "According to Sadānanda Yogīndra, because Īsvara, the Supreme Lord, is the reservoir of all ignorance, He may be called *sarvajña* or omniscient, but one who denies the existence of the omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead is more than Īsvara, or the Lord. His conclusion, therefore, is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Īsvara) is a transformation of material ignorance and that the living entity (*jīva*) is covered by ignorance. Thus he describes both collective and individual existence in darkness. According to Māyāvādī philosophers, the Vaiṣṇava conception of the Lord as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and of the *jīva* or individual

soul as His eternal sevant is a manifestation of ignorance."—*CC*, 1. 7. 114.

8. "It is most apparent that non-devotees violate the rules and regulations of devotional service to equate the whole cosmic manifestation, which is the external feature of Viṣṇu, with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the controller of māyā, or with His quadruple expansions. The equalization of māyā and spirit, or māyā and the Lord, is a sign of atheism."—*CC*, 1.5.40-41.

9. "In the Vedānta-sūtra, devotional service is clearly indicated, but the Māyāvādī philosophers refuse to accept the spiritual body of the Supreme Absolute Person and refuse to accept that the living entity has an individual existence separate from that of the Supreme Lord. Thus they have created atheistic hovoc all over the world, for such a conclusion is against the very nature of the trancendental process of pure devotional service. The Māyāvādī philosophers' unrealizable ambition to become one with the Supreme through denying the existence of the Personality of Godhead results in a most calamitous misrepresentation of spiritual knowledge."—*CC*, 1. 7. 114.

10. "Māyā is controlled by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it is not that He is covered by māyā. Therefore Lord Viṣṇu cannot be a product of the material energy. In the beginning of the Vedānta-sūtra it is said, 'janmādy-saya yataḥ', indicating that the material energy is also an emanation of the Supreme Brahman. How then could He be covered by the material energy? If that were possible, material energy would be greater than the Supreme Brahman. Even these simple arguments, however, cannot be understood by the Māyāvādī

philosophers, and therefore the term *māyayāpahṛta-jñānā* which is applied to them in *Bhagavad-gītā* is extremely appropriate. Anyone who thinks that Lord Viṣṇu is a product of the material energy, as explained by Sadānanda Yogīndra, should immediately be understood to be insane, for his knowledge has been stolen by the illusory energy."—*CC*, 1. 7. 115.

11. "Lord Viṣṇu cannot be placed within the category of the demigods. Those who are actually bewildered by the Māyāvāda philosophy are and are still in the darkness of ignorance consider Lord Viṣṇu to be a demigod."—*CC*, 1. 7. 115.

12. "It is therefore to be concluded that Śaṅkarācārya, in order to present the Supreme Lord, the living entities and the material nature as indivisible and ignorant, tries to cover the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."—*CC*, 1. 7. 121.

13. "He (the Supreme person) is completely free from false ego, for He is the full spiritual identity. It is absolutely impossible for Him to be subjected to ignorance and fall under the spell of misconception (Vivarta-vāda)."—*CC*, 1. 7. 122.

14. "Māyāvādī philosophers materialistically think that if the Supreme Truth expands Himself in everything, He must lose His original form. Thus they think that there cannot be any form other than the expansive gigantic body of the Lord."—*CC*, 1. 7. 122.

15. "Māyāvādīs and others sometimes misunderstand Brahman because every living entity is also Brahman. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Parabrahman (the Supreme Brahman). In the Vedic literature, whenever the words Brahman or Parabrahman are used they are

to be understood to refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. This is their real meaning. Since the entire Vedic literature deals with the subject of Brahman, Kṛṣṇa is therefore the ultimate goal of Vedic understanding."—*CC*, 1. 7. 140.

16. "Partial realization of the Absolute Truth as impersonal Brahman denies the complete opulences of the Lord. This is a hazardous understanding of the Absolute Truth."—*CC*, 1. 7. 140.

17. "Brahman means the greatest, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead is greater than the greatest, just as the sun globe is greater than the sunshine which is all-pervading in the universe. Impersonal Brahman is only the bodily effulgence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but the transcendental form of the Lord is greater than both the impersonal Brahman and localized Paramātmā.—*CC*, 1. 7. 140.

18. "The Māyāvādis' primary occupation is to offend the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. For example, authough Kṛṣṇa demands our surrender in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the greatest scholar and so-called philosopher in India has protested that it is not to Kṛṣṇa that we have to surrender."—*CC*, 1. 7. 144.

19. "The Māyāvādīs do not accept that great power to be a person. Their brains cannot accommodate the fact that this huge cosmic manifestation can be created by a person. This is because as soon as they think of a person, they think of a person within the material world with limited potency. Sometimes the Māyāvādī philosophers will accept Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Rāma as Bhagavān, but they think of the Lord as a person having a material body. The Māyāvādīs do not

understad that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, has a spiritual body. They think of Kṛṣṇa as a great personality, a human being within whom there is the supreme impersonal power, Brahman. Therefore they finally conclude that the impersonal Brahman is the Supreme, not the personality Kṛṣṇa"—*CC*, 2.6.81.

20. "Māyāvādī philosophers study the Vedic literature, but they do not understand that the Absolute Truth in the last stage of realization is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. They do accept the fact that there is a creator of this cosmic manifestation, but that is *anumāna* (hypothesis). The Māyāvādī philosopher's logic is something like seeing smoke on a hill ; when there is a forest fire on a high hill, smoke is first of all visible. The smoke is created when there is fire. Just as one can conclude that there is fire from smoke, the Māyāvādī philosophers conclude that there must be a creator of the cosmic manifestation."—*CC*, 2.6.81.

21. "It is understood that the whole cosmic manifestation emanated from Brahman, the Supreme Absolute Truth. The creation subsists by the energy of the Supreme Brahman and after annihilation, merges into the Supreme Brahman. From this we can understand that the Absolute Truth can be categorized in three-cases-ablative, instrumental and locative. According to these three cases, the Absolute Truth is positively personified."—*CC*, 2.6.144.

22. "By word jugglery, Śaṅkarācārya tried to create an illusory presentation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His relationship with the living entities and the cosmic manifestation. *Tat tvam asi* is a

warning to the living entity not to mistake the body for the self. Therefore *tattvam asi* is especially meant for the conditioned soul."—*CC*, 2. 6. 175.

23. "Māyāvāda philosophy states that the Supreme Lord, the living entities and the cosmic manifestation are all transformations of illusory energy. To support this atheistic theory, the Māyāvādīs cite false scriptures, which make people bereft of transcendental knowledge and addicted to fruitive activities and mental speculation."—*CC*, 2. 6. 182.

24. "This is the viewpoint of Māyāvāda philosophy. Māyāvāda philosophy supports the impersonalist view that Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has no form. One can imagine impersonal Brahman in any form-as Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva, Vivasvān, Gaṇeśa or Devī Durgā"—*CC*, 2.18.109.

25. "Impersonalists do not accept the personal feature of the Supreme personality of Godhead."—*CC*, 2.25.115.

26. "Even a liberated soul merged in the impersonal Brahman effulgence is attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. He thus installs a Deity and renders the Lord service". This is a quotation from Śaṅkarācāry's commentary on the Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī".—*CC*, 2.25.156.

27. "The Māyāvādī philosophers wrongly think that Kṛṣṇa loses His own separate existence in His many expansions. This thought is material in nature. We have experience in the material world that a thing, when fragmentally distributed, loses its own original identity. But the Māyāvādī philosophers fail to understand that absolute means that one plus ;one is equal to one, and that one minus one is also equal to one".—*BG*, 4.35.

28. "Impersonal Brahman is also supported by Kṛṣṇa: *brahmaṇo hipratiṣṭhāham.* Therefore in all ways Kṛṣṇa in the Supreme Reality".—*BG*, 5.17.

29. "Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person, but at the same time He is beyond the knowledge of Brahman and Paramātmā. The *yogis* and *jñānis* are confusd in their attempts to understand Kṛṣṇa, Although the greatest of the impersonalists, Śripāda Śaṅkarācārya, has admitted in his *Gitā* commentary that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme personality of Godhead, his followers do not accept Kṛṣṇa such."—*BG*, 7.3.

30. "Therefore the monistic contention that ultimate truth is formless and that form is imposed does not hold true. It is clearly started here that it is not imposed." —*BG*, 7. 24.

31. "The Supreme Personality of Godhead in His transcendental form of bliss and knowledge is covered by the internal potency of the *brahmajyoti*, and the less inteligent impersonalists cannot see the Supreme on this account."—*BG*, 7. 25.

32. "Brahman exists as the all-pervading energy in this phenomenal world. Therefore the Vedas have defined Brahman as formless, impersonal, pure, and so on. But the source of Brahman is an eternal personality who has no material form but who has a transcendental form full of spiritual potencies and all divine qualities." *SOK*, P. 55.

33. "The materialistic, fruitive workers make the mistake of thinking that this supreme transcendental personality is mundane, and thus they become degraded into

pseudo-devotees. And the dry speculators, hav in been repulsed by the material phenomena in their search for knowledge of the Absolute, think that the transcendental form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also repulsive, thus clearly proving that their ascending process of acquiring knowledge is insufficient and inferior. Both these groups are in a pathetie spiritual state."—*SOK*, P. 56.

34. "As consciousness, the *jiva* pervades his body and mind, which he has acquired due to his *karma*, or fruitive activities. Similarly, the Supreme Lord pervades the entire creation—His universal body-with His consciousness. Though the *jīva* permeates his body as impersonal consciousness, he is always a Person. Similarly, although in His impersonal, all-pervasive feature the Supreme Lord saturates the cosmic manifestation with His consciousness, in His personal feature He remains eternally in Goloka Vṛndāvana performing pastimes."—*SOK*, P. 133.

B. *Our observations*

1. (a) The Absolute may be Personal or impersonal. (See Note at the hottom of this Section).

(b) According to Vaiṣṇavism, the Absolute in its manifestation as Paramātman concerned with the governance of the world and the *jivas* is *saguṇa* or qualified. In the view of the Advaita Vedāntins also, Īśvara connected with the creation sustenance, dissolution etc. of the world is *saguṇa*.

(c) According to the Vaiṣṇavas, the Absolute as Bhagavat is endowed with the *svarūpa-śaktis* or essential powers of *sandhinī* (*sat*), *samvit* (*cit*) and *hlādinī* (*ānanda*); yet Bhagavat is called *nirguṇa* or qualityless because of the fact that these qualities are divine or transcendental, as distinct from the empirical qualities. The Advaita Vedāntins, on the other hand, consider these essential qualities as identical with the essence of the Absolute, since, in their view, the Absolute is of the nature *sat*, *cit* and *ananda* i. e. existence, consciousness and bliss. Hence, the difference between these two schools is mere a matter of outlook.

2. (a) The impersonalists certainly accept the transcendental form of the Lord. (See Note under this Section).

(b) This view cannot be accepted, as it goes directly against the Law of *Karman*, according to which one is to get fruits just in accordance with one's actions. An aspirant leading a long life of self-contral, austerity, penance and renunciation and a demon maintaining hatred against God can in no way get the same fruit. In our view, in the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the impersonlists have been equated with the demons only to divert the aspirants from the path of knowledge to that of devotion.

3. An Advaitin endeavouring to realise the impersonal Absolute is naturally satisfied with the realisation of that aspect of the Absolute and does not hanker after the Personal Absolute. This does not at all disqualify his title of Vedāntin. In a like manner, a devotee endeavouring to realise the Personal Absolute is also satisfied with the realisation of that aspect of the Absolute and does not hanker after the impersonal Absolute. For that, a devotee also

cannot be regarded as disqualified for the title of Vedāntin.

4. (a) The terms '*nirākāra*', '*arūpa*' etc. do not necessarily mean 'devoid of material form', as held by the Vaiṣṇavas ; for Brahman described in the *Bhagavat-Gītā* to be resting on the Supreme Person and declared by the Vaiṣṇavas as the lustre of the body of Bhagavat is also formless 'in the literal sense' and not in the sense of 'devoid of material form'. In our view, the said terms may mean both 'devoid of any form' and 'devoid of material form'. When these terms denote the Indeterminate Absolute of the followers of the path of knowledge, we are to take the first meaning, and when they denote the Personal Absolute, we are to take the second meaning.

(b) Though the Advaitins are the aspirants for the Impersonal Brahman, they accept that the Absolute may manifest itself in a spiritual form also for the sake of the devotees. That means, the Advaitins accept both the views that the Absolute is formless and that it is endowed with form. (See Note at the bottom of this Section).

5. (a) Hundreds of verses can be quoted from the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedas* to show that the Absolute is not only Personal but also Impersonal. It is an uncatholic attitude to accept any of these two views and reject the other. (See Note at the bottom).

(b) No Advaitin ever thinks himself to be greater than Kṛṣṇa. This is completely a misinterpretation of the Advaitic philosophy. (See Note-3 (a) under Section-4).

6. (a) Yes, anything other than pure knowledge is certainly material. Of course, here knowledge means self-shining consciousness which identical with bliss also. According to the Vaiṣṇavas also, all the objects lying outside the Lord's essential and peripheral powers of the nature of consciousness are material.

(b) Viṣṇu or the Supreme Person has never been described by the Advaitins as a product of ignorance. In their view, the form of the Supreme Person is completely beyond the sphere of ignorance. Īśvara, the world-governor, is, of course, said to be endowed with māyā or comic ignorance. But this Īśvara of the Advaitins is not the Supreme Person; he is identical with the Paramātman of the Vaiṣṇavas, who is the controller of the selves and the world. Further, this Īśvara of the Advaitins is also not the product of ignorance. Brahman the Absolute, governs the world with the help of māyā or ignorance is called Īśvara. This means that Īśvara is the Lord of māyā, and not the product of ignorance. It has been clearly stated by Śaṅkara that the Lord is not touched by māyā ("paramātmāpi saṁsāra-māyayā na saṁspṛśyate"—*BSŚB*, 2.1.9.

(c) Sadānanda has nowhere said that the pure-*sattva* of the Vaiṣṇavas is nothing but pradhāna or prakṛti. Pradhāna is an equilibrium of the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; it is never pure *sattva*.

7. (a) Īśvara of the Advaitins is *sarvajña* or omniscient not because he is the reservoir of all ignorance but because māyā or cosmic ignorance, which is the

material of the whole universe and the instrument in his task of creating and governing the world, is known or manifested to him ("etatsamaṣṭy-ajñānopahitaṁ caitayam—sarvaiñaḥ"—*Subodhinī* ; "Īśvarasya tu sakalāni ajñānāni sphuranti, sarvajñatvāt" —Bālaboddhini). According to the Advaitins, the term '*sarva*' forming a part of the term '*sarvajña*' means the totality of ajñāna or māyā ("samaṣṭy-ajñānasya sarvatvam"—*Vidvan-manorañjanī*).

(b) The view that "one who denies the Supreme Personality is more than Īśvara' is a coinage by BV ; no Advaitin has ever said so.

(c) Īśvara is neither a manifestation nor a transformation of ignorance ; on the contrary, māyā or ignorance is the instrument and material by which the Lord creates and governs the world.

(d) That the living entity is covered by ignorance is accepted by all the spiritualists including the Vaiṣṇavas.

8. (a) The Advaitins never equalise māyā with spirit or the Lord. In their view māyā is the instrument and material by which the Lord manifests the world.

(b) The Advaitins do not follow the rules of devotional service not because they try to equalise māyā with the Lord, but because they aspire to realise the Absolute in its formless form.

9. (a) Yes, there is a reference to devotion (saṃrādhana) in the Vedānta-sūtra, ("api ca saṁrādhane pratyakṣānumānābhyām"—*BS*, 3.2.24). The Advaitins have averred the value of devotion and, in this connection, they have accepted that the Lord has

a divine from—lying beyond māyā—which is seen by the yogins or devotees through devotion and meditation ("api cainam ātmānaṁ nirasta-samasta-prapañcam avyaktaṁ saṁrādhnakāle paśyanti yoginah, saṁrādhanaṁ ca bhakti-dhyāna-praṇidhānādy-anuṣṭhānam"—*BSŚB*, 3.2.24).

(b) Though the Advaitins aspire to merge into the formless form of Brahman, they hold that if any aspirant desires to retain his separate existence, he may do so. (See Note 7 under Section—4)

(c) Advatism is never atheism ; neither has it created a havoc in the world.

(d) Devotion is not the only way of spiritualism, and the non-pursuance of the path of devotion does not mean atheism.

(e) Identity with Brahman is not 'unrealisable', for the *Upaniṣads*, have set forth the attainment of this identity as the goal of spiritual endeavour. The *Vedānta-sūtra* also says that sages like Vāmadeva realised this identity.

10. Lord Viṣṇu has never been regarded by the Advaitins as a product of material energy (see our obs. 7 under this section).

11. The Advaitins have nowhere described Viṣṇu as a demigod; on the contrary, they have identified Viṣṇu with the Supreme ("paraṁ pariśuddhaṁ Viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ pratipadyante"—*BSŚB*, 4.3.10).

12. Śaṅkara has paid his whole-hearted devotion to the Supreme Person ; he has never covered the glories of the Lord (See Note udder Section—5).

13. See obs. 7 under this Section).

14. The Advaitins are never materialists (see obs. 22 under Section 6). In their view, the Absolute manifests itself in hundred ways and exists in everything without losing its essence (see Note under this Section).

15. See obs. 4 under Section-9.

16. The Advaitins accept the Absolute as impersonal for the followers of the path of knowledge and as personal for the devotees (see Note under Section-1).

17. (a) The Vaiṣṇavas regard the Supreme Person as greater than Brahman out of their deep love and devotion for the Lord. This view may be supported also in the secondary sense that the concept of the Personal Absolute is most suitable to human psychology.

(b) From a logical and impartial point of view, however, the Impersonal Absolute and the Personal Absolute are completely identical, different between them lying simply in their way of manifestation.

18. See obs. 1-3 under Section-12.

19. (a) The Advaitins do accept the Personal Absolute endowed with infinite power and knowledge (see Note under this Section)

(b) The Advaitins have never said that the body of Bhagavat or the Lord—either as Rāma or as Kṛṣṇa—is material in nature. In their view also, the body of the Lord is spiritual in nature. It is the bobies of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa born as human beings at some Particular times that are described as material. (see obs. 1 and 2 under Section-12).

20. (a) The Advaitins accept the Impersonal Absolute from the view point of the path of knowledge and the Personal Absolute from the view-point of the path of devotion (see Note at the bottom of this Section).

(b) The Advaitins have never tried to prove the existence of God on the basis of *anumāna* or inference ; rather, they are firm on the point that God cannot be proved by *anumāna.* They argue that a thing which cannot be an object of perception cannot be an object of inference also, and since God is not an object of perception, He cannot be an object of inference, too. In their view, the inferences put forward in the scriptures or in philosophical discourses are simply *sambhāvanas* or hypotheses, and not proofs. ("rūpādy-abhāvād-dhi nāyam-arthaḥ pratyakṣagocaraḥ, liṅgādy-abhāvāc-ca nānumānam —*BŚB*, 2.1.11 ; pratyakṣa-viṣaya-vailakṣaṇyāt nā' tmāstitva-siddhiḥ. tathā' numānād-api"—*Śaṅkara-bhāṣya* on *Bṛ. Upaniṣad*, 1.1.1 ; "sambhāvanā-mātreṇa liṅgopanyāsaḥ"—*Ānandagiri* on *ibid*).

21. That the Absolute is categorized in three cases does not necessarily confirm that the Absolute is positively a Person. In our view, the position that the world emerges from the Absolute and again merges into it goes more in favour of the Impersonal Absolute.

22. See Note at the bottom of this Section.

23. The spiritual or other activities of the Advaitins cannot be regarded as fruitive ones simply because they pursue the path of the Impersonal Brahman. Whether an act is fruitive or otherwise is to be judged from the view-point of the psychological

inclination of the doer, and this criterion is the same for both the Personalists and the Impersonalists. (See also Note under this Section and obs. 5-6 under Section 9 and obs. 16 under Section 6.

24-25 (a) The Advaitins do accept that the Absolute—Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa or Kṛṣṇa—has a divine or spiritual form lying beyond the sphere of māyā or ignorance, and that this form is seen by the yogins or devotees. (See Note under this Section).

(b) The Advaitins do hold that the Absolute can manifest itself in various forms, and they never says that these forms are creations of imaginations.

(c) The view that the Absolute can manifest itself in different forms is supported by the *Vedas* and other scriptures. The *RV* says, "ekaṁ sad-viprā vahudhā vadanti"—Reality is one, the spiritualists describe it in various ways".

26. This adds to our view that Śaṅkara accepts the Personal Absolute also. It should not, however, be held on this account that the Personal Absolute is actually higher than the Impersonal Absolute. The acceptance of the greatness of the Personal Absolute indicates simply this that the path of devotion is better than the path of knowledge, since the former is more suitable to human psychology.

27. The Advaitins never say that the Absolute loses its existence in its expansions. These are views coined by the imagination of BV.

28. See Note under this Section and Section-3.

29. (a) No Advaitin has never questioned the supremacy

of Kṛṣṇa, the highest personal manifestation of the Absolute. BV has imposed these self-made views on the Advaitins.

(b) For our comments on the view that Kṛṣṇa lies beyond the knowledge of Brahman and Paramatmen, see Notes under this Section and Section-2.

30. See Note under this Section.

31. *Brahma-jyoti* is the light of light ("jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ" —*Muṇḍaka Up.* 2. 2. 9) ; it cannot cover the transcendental form of the Lord. The impersonalists do not see the transcendental form of the Lord, not because the form of the Lord is covered for them, but because this form does not suit to their taste or aspiration.

32. The Vedas described the Absolute as both formless and endowed with form. (See Note under this Section).

33.(a) 'Speculation' meaning 'philosophical thinking' may be 'dry', but the knowledge of Brahman is not mere philosophical speculation ; it is 'realisation of the nature of Brahman'. In the *Upaniṣads,* Brahman is described as of the nature of 'bliss' and as 'mass of bliss' ("ānanda-ghana"). Again, it is said that the universe comes from bliss, exists in bliss and again merges into bliss (*Tait. Up.* 3. 6). This bliss is Brahman, and the realisation of this 'bliss' can never be 'dry'.

(b) The Advaitins never describe the body of the Supreme Person as material, mundane of repulsive. In their view also, the body of the Lord is spiritual in nature.

34. Brahman pervades the whole universe, since there is nothing in the universe which is different from Brahman or lying outside Brahman. The devotees attached to the transcendental form of the Lord existing in *nitya* or eternal Vṛndāvana may hold that the Lord pervades the world by his lustre, (See Note under Section-3).

Note :

1. In the view of the Vaiṣṇava thinkers, the Ultimate Reality cannot be a quality-less, formless and difference-less entity, as held by Śaṅkara, but is essentially qualified, endowed with a beautiful and illustrious form and having endless differences within its being. Śrī Caitanya says that the lord possessess six principal qualities of *aiśvaya,* (prosperity) *vīrya* (valour) etc, and a beautiful human form blue in complexion and holding a flute in hand. Śrī Caitanya claims that all the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra of* Bādarāyaṇa have their significance in establishing Bhagavat with sixfold quality as the Ultimate Reality.

But Śaṅkara's concept of the quality-less and formless Brahman cannot be challenged as unwarranted. The *Upaniṣads* declare again and again that Brahman is devoid of colour, form, quality etc. Again, though Śrī Kṛṣṇa has declared in the *Gītā* that Puruṣottama or the Lord having form, quality etc. is the highest reality, he does not deny the concept of the qualityless and formless Brahman, rather, he says that Brahman of this nature is sustained by Puruṣottama. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* also says that Brahman is an aspect of the Ultimate Reality. A passage of this *Purāṇa* quoted more than once in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says that the same Ultimate Reality is denoted by the terms 'Bhagavat', 'Paramātman' and 'Brahman'. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* also does not do away with the concept of the qualityless and formless Brahman. It has here been declared again and again that the formless Brahman is simply the bodily lustre or an aspect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord. Hence, it cannot be held that Śrī Caitanya denied the existence of the *nirguṇa* Brahman. At places, of course, he is seen to be vocal against the formless and quality-less Brahman, but to synthesise this position with his total philosophy, we shall have to say that Śrī Caitanya did so only to put emphasis on the concept of Bhagavat, the Lord with form and quality. prescribed by him for the people of all categories.

A study of the well-known principal *Upaniṣads* does not warrant Śrī Caitanya's claim that the significance of all the *Upaniṣads* lies in the concept of Bhagavat having form and quality, It can be claimed on the contrary that by far the greater portions of these *Upaniṣads* are in favour of the concept of qualityless and formless Brahman, while passages speaking of Brahman having form and quality are very insignificant. The other *Upanisads*, generally known as the minor *Upaniṣads*, give us a different picture. Here we find that passages in favour of Brahman having form and quality have surpassed passages speaking of qualityless and formless Brahman. In view of these facts, we can simply say that both the aspects of qualityless and formless Brahman as also of Brahman having quality and form are accepted by the *upaniṣads*.

2. Like the *upaniṣadas*, the *Brahma-sūtra* also holds that Brahman is of the nature of *sat* or existence, *cit* or consciousness and *ānanda* or bliss. *Brahma-sūtra* says : 'ānandādayaḥ pradhānasya, (3.3.11) 'The qualities of blissfulness, consciousness, truth .etc. are those of Brahman, the principal object of discussion ! Brahman is *sat* or existent ; it exists everywhere and at all time i.e. it is all-pervasive and eternal. *Brahma-sūtra* says : 'anena sarva-gatatvaṁ āyāma-śabdādibhyaḥ'='From this ; the all-pervasiveness of Brahman is

established ; also from the *Śruti*-passages indicating pervasiveness, it is known'. Here, pervasiveness indicates eternality, minuteness etc. as said in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*—'nityam vibhuṁ sarvagataṁ susūkṣmam' (1.1.6). Because of its pervasiveness and eternality, Brahman is the source or locus of all the limited and non-enternal objects of the world. Since Brahman is of the nature of infinite knowledge, all kinds of knowledge including that contained in the *Śāstras* or *Upaniṣads* originate from it. Being of the nature of pure and infinite bliss, again, Brahman is the source of all the joys of all beings, 'This nature of Brahman as sac-cid-ananda is to be known from the *Śāstra* or *Upaniṣads*'—'śāstra-yonitvāt' (1.1.3).

Here, the Advaitins explaining Brahman as qualityless hold that these elements of existence, all-pervasiveness, eternality, knowledge and bliss are not the qualities of Brahman but are aspects of its essence, while the others, specially the Vaiṣṇavas, who look upon Brahman as qualified, regard these elements as the real qualities of Brahman.

Brahma-sūtra ascribes some more qualities to Brahman : (1) 'janmādyasya yataḥ' (1.1.2)='Brahman is the source or agent of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world. (2) 'dhṛteśca mahimno' syāsmin...' (1.3.16)='The space in the heart is Brahman, as it is said to be governing the world. (3) 'akṣaram ambarānta-dhṛteḥ' (1.3.10)='Akṣara, the Indestruclible, is Brahman, since it is said to uphold the whole universe up to ākāśa or space.' (4) 'sa ca praśāsanāt' (1.3.11) ='Akṣara is Brahman as it controls the world'. (5) 'sarvopetā ca tad-darśanāt' (2.1.29)='Brahman is endowed with omnipotence, since it is said in the *Śruti*.' (6) 'sarva-dharmopapatteś ca' (2.1.36)='All the attributes (like omnipotence, omniscience, pervasiveness etc.) required for the worldcause are sound to exist in Brahman'. The Advaitins regard these qualities of Brahman as non-essential, while the Vaiṣṇavas look upon them as essential.

In some *sūtras* of *Brahma-sutra*, again, Brahman is described negatively as devoid of any quality: (1) 'adṛśyatvādi-guṇako dharmokteḥ' (1.2.21)='That reality, endowed with the qualities of non-perceivability, non-objectivity, formlessness, colourlessness etc. is Brahman, for these are described in the *Śruti* as the attributes of Brahman.' (2) 'tad-avyaktam āha' (3.2.23)="The Śruti says it (Brahman) is inexpressible or imperceivable: (3) 'arūpavad eva hi tat-pradhānatva' (3.2.14)='Brahman is without any form, for it is described principally as formless, qualityless etc.'

There are some places where *Brahmasūtra* has taken into account both the aspects of Brahman—i e. Brahman as devoid of form and quality and also as having form and quality. (1) na sthānato'pi parasyobhaya-liṅgaṁ sarvatra hi' (3.2.11)= 'The nature of Brahman is not affected by the conditions of place etc., as in all places it is described in two ways'—as endowed with cosmic qualities and as devoid of qualities, (2) 'prakāśavac-cāvaiyarthyāt' (3.2.15)='Like luminosity itself Brahman may be said to be endowed with form and quality and also to be devoid of them, form both these descriptions are meaningful. (3) 'ādhyānāya prayojanābhāvāt' (3.3.14) ='The forms and qualities spoken of Brahman are meant for meditation upon Brahman, for no other necessity can be found'. This indicates that the other aspect of Brahman i.e. Brahman without form and quality is also taken into consideration. (4) 'api saṁrādhane ‖pratyakṣānumānābhyām' (3.2.24)='Brahman with form and quality can be perceived in meditation, as it is known from the *Śruti* and the *Smṛti*'. (5) Vyāsa, however, says that in all cases, the nature of Brahman as consciousness remains unchanged. The *sūtra* 'āha ca, tam-mātram' (3.2.16) says that the *Śruti* describes Brahman as consciousness only.

The problem whether Brahman should be regarded as qualityless and formless or as endowed with quality and form can be solved in the following way: Brahman, being the Absolute—completely free and independent, must be regarded as having the capability of remaining wilh form and quality or without them. It may be argued that the forms and qualities are not essential, since they are assumed by Brahman under certain conditions. To this, our reply is that, even so, the will of Brahman to assume these forms and qualities must be accepted. And this will is a quality, which, in other words, in the dormant state of all the qualities and forms manifested. Hence, it must be accepted that there is quality in Brahman. Now, qualities are of two types—some are essential, some are inessential or temporary. The qualities connected with governing the world are inessential qualities of Brahman, while the qualities of existence, knowledge, bliss, eternality, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence are essential ones. In our view, the essential qualities and the substance have no separate existence: in a trancendental or higher plane, they form a synthetic reality which is neither a substance nor a quality but a synthesis of both. The Advaitins who put emphasis on the substantive aspect of Brahman, regard it as an unqualified bare substance, while the Vaiṣṇavas who put stress on both the aspect of substance and quality regard it as a qualified substance, which however, is completely different from the empirical substances. It is this Brahman with essential qualities that is called Puruṣottama, who, by manifesting these qualities reveals himself in a divine form in a divine land. And the state of Brahman in which these qualities and forms are not manifested is regarded as qualityless and formless Brahman.

3. Though Śrī Caitanya advocates the philosophy of Puruṣottama, the Personal Absolute, he accepts the existence of the Impersonal Brahman also, as has been seen in our foregoing

discussion. In a like manner, though Śaṅkara is vocal about the Impersonal Brahman, he accepts the reality of Puruṣottama, the Personal Absolute, as is proved by the following facts :

(1) Śaṅkara says that Nārāyaṇa, the Absolute Self, may manifest himself in many forms and exist separately, for on the basis of Sruti-passages like 'He exists in one form, (he) exists in three forms' etc., it is known that the Absolute manifests itself in many forms ("asau nārāyaṇah paraḥ......ātmanā ātmānam anekadhā vyūhya avasthitaḥ......'sa ekadhā bhavati tridhā bhavati' ityādi-śrutibhyaḥ paramātmanaḥ anekadhābhāvasya adhigatatvāt"—*BSŚB*, 2. 2. 42).

(2) He further says that during *saṁrādhana* or meditation through devotion the *yogins* see or perceive the Absolute Self, inexpressible and lying completely beyond the empirical world ("api cainam ātmānaṁ nirasta-samasta-prapañcam avaktaṁ saṁrādhanakāle paśyanti yoginaḥ"—*BSŚB*, 3. 2. 24). In support of this view, Śaṅkara quotes the following passages from the *Śrutis* and the *Smṛtis* : (a) "Kaścid dhīraḥ pratyagātmānam aikṣat"—Some aspirant steady in meditation perceived the Inner Self, (b) "taṁ paśyate niṣkalaṁ dhyāyamānaḥ" —One meditating upon the indivisible Brahman perceive it (c) "yoginas taṁ paśyanti bhagavantaṁ sanātanam"—The yogins perceive the eternal Lord.

(3) In his commentary on the *Śvet. Upaniṣad* and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Śaṅkara has clearly accepted the trans-empirical form of the Absolute.

(4) Further, the devotional hymns addressed to Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Śiva and the Universal Mother are replete with such deep and natural flow of devotional emotion that it will be quite unnatural to hold that Śaṅkara does not accept the

reality of these transempirical and personal forms of the Absolute. All this shows that Śaṅkara accept the existence of Puruṣottam Kṛṣṇa, the Personal Absolute.

It follows from the above position that the philosophy of Śaṅkara has two currents: When he speaks strictly as a philosopher, he points his attention to the formless and qualityless Brahman or the philosophical Absolute of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Again, when he peaks as a devotee, he directs his attention to the divine beauty of Puruṣottama, the emotional Absolute, having existence, consciousness and bliss as his essence.

It may be mentioned here that in the life of Śaṅkara, we find two distinct stage—one prior to the realisation of Śakti or the Universal Mother in Vārāṇasi; the other, posterior to this realisation. In the first stage, he was a staunch propagator of the qualityless and formless Brahman and, hence, of the path of knowledge, while in the second stage, he was inclined to the Brahman with form and quality and also to the path of devotion. The works bearing marks of his deep devotion to various gods and goddesses seem to be productions of the second stage of his life.

Hence, the position stands thus: Both the aspects of Brahman i. e. Brahman devoid of quality and form as also Brahman endowed with quality and form are spoken of in the *Upaniṣads* and *Brahma-sūtra,* and both Śaṅkara and Śrī Caitanya have accepted these two aspects of Brahman. The difference between these two thinkers is simply this that Śankara following the path of knowledge puts emphasis on the formless and qualityless Brahman or the philosophical Absolute, while Śrī Caitanya following the path of devotion gives greater importance to Brahman with quality and form i. e. Puruṣottama, the emotional Absolute. It is childishness to ask which of these two is higher or more fundamental, as to ask which between ice and water is truer or more fundamental. The Absolute may reveal itself in any of the said two aspects according to the demand of the spiritual aspirants, just as the same substance may manifest itself as water or ice according to the degree of temperature.

In this connection, it is worthy of notice that, for Śaṅkara, Brahman in its essential nature—either as the Impersonal Brahman or as Puruṣottama—is not the creator of the world, since creatorship or cosmic agency of Brahman is conditioned by ajñāna or ignorance which is an empirical entity, while the Impersonal Brahman and Bhagavat or Puruṣottama are trans-empirical. In other words, the creator-Brahman is a lower manifestation of the Impersonal Brahman or Purusottama. This creator-Brahman qualified or conditioned by māyā, the cosmic ignorance or material power, may be identified with Paramātman of Śrī Caitanya's philosophy.

It is criticised by some including BV that in the view of Sadānanda Yogīndra, Īśvara, the creator-God of the Advaitins, is endowed with ignorance and, hence, is subjected to ignorance. Actually, however, no Advaitin has ever held such a view. Īśvara is always described by the Advaitins at the master of ignorance, as distinct from the empirical jīva which is subjected to ignorance. That Īśvara is defined as Brahman qualified or conditioned by māyā or ignorance means that he creates or reveals the world with the help of ignorance, the material power. And this view is held by all the spiritualists. The Vaiṣṇavas also say that Paramātman creates the world by his power of māyā. The view of the Śaṅkarites is almost the same. The only difference between these two views is that, according to the Vaiṣṇavas, māyā is a real power, while in the view of the Advaitins, it is neither real like Brahman, nor unreal like a sky-flower. This view of the Advaitins means that, so long as a person does not acquire the real knowledge of Brahman, maya will be existing for him, while with the acquisition of Brahma-knowledge it will be non-existent for him. This creator-Brahman called Īśvara or personal God may be identified with the Paramātman or Nārāyaṇa of Śrī Caitanya's philosophy, who is entrusted with the cosmic activities, but not with Bhagavat who is not at all concerned with the worldprocess. Bhagavat or Puruṣottama, like the Impersonal Absolute, is higher than the creator-God. Though he is endowed with form and quality, he is described as *nirguṇa* or qualityless and *nirviśeṣa* or indeterminate in the sense that the qualities and forms of the Lord are completely different from those of the mundane world.

4. The Pāñcarātra philosophers look upon the Absolute from two view-points. They accept, on the one hand, the *nirguṇa* or qualityless Brahman of the *Upaniṣads* and, on the other hand, the *saguṇa* or quailfied Brahman or Īśvara of the Purāṇas. Like Śaṅkarācārya, the Pāñcarātra thinkers accept the *nirguṇa* Brahman lying beyond māyā as the philosophical Absolute and the *saguṇa* Brahman endowed with māyā as the emotional absolute, and make a difference between the two In their view, the *nirguṇa* Brahman is free from cosmic activities. while the *saguṇa* Brahman is endowed with these activities i.e. he is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Of course, it is held that these two realities are but two manifestations of the same reality. Accordingly, Brahman is its entirity is described here as *nirguṇa-guṇī*. It is, however, to be noted that '*nirguṇa*' here does not mean totally 'devoid

of qualities'; it means devoid of worldly or empirical qualities.

The nature of the absolute accepted in Pāñcarātra is being presented here in two ways: one in pursuance of the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the other in accordance with the *Saṁhitās*.

(a) In the Nārāyaṇīya, the absolute or Parabrahman has been presented in both the ways mentioned above i.e. it is described, on the one hand, as *nirguṇa* Brahman in the line of the *jñānins* or followers of the path of knowledge and, on the other hand, as Parama Puruṣa or Vāsudeva or Nārāyaṇa, in the line of the *bhaktas* or devotionists.[1]

Parabrahman is birthless, deathless eternal (*nitya, sanātana*), qualityless (*nirguṇa*), motionless (*acala*), actionless (*niṣkriya*), partless (*niṣkala*) and indivisible ; it is extremely, subtle, stable and enexpressible[2] ; it is of the nature of knowledge (jñānātma) ; it has no beginning or end. It lies beyond the senses, the mind and the knowing process of the common people ; it cannot be seen or touched or smelt or tasted. It is *vibhu* or all-pervasive and the inner soul of everybody. This Parabrahman is the only reality, all other objects being its reflections only. Though bodiless, Parabrahman exists in all the bodies ; though inexpressible, it expresses itself in a divine form through māyā to satisfy the desires of the devotees. This form of Parabrahman can be seen only through devotion and deep love for the Lord. Parabrahman lies beyond the three *guṇas* of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas.* Being motionless, stable and free from the three qualities, Parabrahman is *niṣkriya* or actionless, and, hence, is not connected with the cosmic processes of creation, sustenance and destruction.[3]

Parabrahman is described in the Nārāyaṇīya as qualified

(*saguṇa, guṇātma*) also. This *saguṇa* Brahman is otherwise called Īśvara or Puruṣottama—the Highest Puruṣa. He is the Lord of the world (*jagatpati*), who performs the cosmic acts of creation, sustenance and destruction. He is omniscient (*sarvajña*) and omnipotent (*sarvaśaktimāt*). He is of the nature of knowledge (*jñāna-svarūpa*) and the first bestower of knowledge of all kinds (*ādiguru*). He is the sustainer of protector of all and the founder of law and morality. He is eternal (*nitya, sanātana*), all-pervasive (*vibhu*), beginningless (*anādi*) and endless (*ananta*), All the *jīvas* exist in him ; he also exists in all the *jīvas* as the inner soul. He is the agent, instrument and also the effect of all actions. When all other things are destroyed, he exists in his own light or knowledge.[4] Though he regulates the whole world, he is not subject to any action and is not attached to anything. He is the purest and best in the universe ; there is nothing purer and greater than Īśvara.

A special quality of Puruṣottama mentioned in the *Nārāyaṇīya* is that, he is *premamaya* or full of love and the reservoir of all the excellent and auspicious qualities. Further, he is endowed with a divine form, which is the locus of unthinkable and indescribable beauty and sweetness, which is of the nature of pure *sattva*-quality untouched bv *rajas* and tamas, and which is brilliant like the rays of thousand suns. He approaches his devotees with this form, as their nearest and dearest one, and gives them bliss and well-being with his unbounded mercy. He is the *kalpatarru* or the wish-felfilling tree for the devotees.[5] This aspect of Purusttama is the central point of the path of devotion found in the later Vaiṣṇava-Vedānta.

Now, according to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, this *saguṇa* Brahman or Puruṣottama includes in his bosom the *nirguṇa* Brahman also. Hence, Puruṣottama, the Absolute, is described here as nirguṇoguṇī or unqualified-cum-qualified.[6]

(b) In the Pāñcarātra *Saṁhitās*, the philosophical Absolute has been called Parabrahman, or Paramātman and its transcendental nature has been described in the same way as the *nirguṇa* Brahman has benn described in the *Upaṇiṣads.*[7] The Parabrahman of the Pāñcarātra *Saṁhitās*, however, being associated with devotion and the relevant ritualistic performances, has attained a new dimention.

According to the *Saṁhitās*, Parabrahman is, in essence, formless (*amūrta*), coloursless (*arūpa*), actionless (*niṣkriya*), beginningless (*anādi*) infinite (*asīma*) and inexpressible (avyakta). It is eternal i. e. not subject to creation and destruction, it is beginningless, endless, unchangeable, eternal, independent, faultles and self-manifest. It cannot be described by any positive or negative qualification. It is timeless i. e. lying outside the three points of time—past, present and future. It exists neither in the front nor at the back, neither above nor below. It is neither long nor short, neither gross nor subtle. It is free from all contradictions. It is one without a second ; it is the highest reality free from all conditions ; it pervades all things and exists every where, it is the cause of all causes and the resort of everything. It is tranquil like a waveless vast ocean. It lies beyond the names and forms of the world ; it is beyond space and time, and is beyond human intellect or understanding. It cannot be described properly in any human language or word ; It is denoted simply by *'sat'* or *'asti'* meaning 'existent'.[8]

Parabrahman is the sustainer or controller of the whole universe ; yet it is not attached to anything of the world and, hence, is not influenced or effected by the objects of the world, just as a lotus-leaf is not wet by water. And, since it is not attached to anything, it has no desire to be fulfilled, and is free from all pains. It is *sac-cid-ānanda* or existence, consciousness and bliss. It is of the nature of pure consciousness and bliss. On the one hand, it is free from all worldly qualities, and, on the other hand, it is endowed with all the excellent qualities. It is *nirguṇa* or free from wordly qualities and *guṇaguṇya* or existing behind all the worldly qualities.*

Saguṇa Brahman :

Saguṇa Brahman or Nārāyaṇa, according to the Pāñcarātra *Saṁhitās*, is the agent of the creation, sustenance and annihilation of the world. It is the manifest form of the Unmanifest or Parabrahman. He is the controller of all the *jīvas* and the regulator of their fates through the Law of Karman. For the regulation of the material world and the *jīvaṣ*, Parabrahman is associated with its ever-active creative power called Lakṣmī and Parabrahman associated with this power is called Nārāyaṇa. Mythologically or from the view-point of devotion, Lakṣmī is looked upon as the consort or Nārāyaṇa, though, actually, it is nothig but the creative power of Brahman. According to the Saṁhitās, Parabrahman is not concerned with the cosmic activities ; it is its creative power that performs these cosmic activities.[10]

Lakṣmī or the power of Brahman has two aspects, namely, *bhūti* and *kriyā*. Through the aspect of *bhūti*, Brahman is the *upādāna-kāraṇa* or material cause of the world, and through the aspect of *kriyā*, it is the *nimitta-kāraṇa* or the efficient cause. Again, through these two aspects, she manifests herself as both the *jñātṛ* or knower and the *jñeya* or knowable. Lakṣmī is the eternal conscious power of the Lord ; she is not the material power like the *prakṛti* of Sāṁkhya. Though Brahman is called the cause or agent of the creation, substenance and annihilation of the world, in reality, it is its power Lakṣmī that is the cause of all these cosmic activities.[11]

Now, since Lakṣmi is the power and Brahman or Nārāyaṇa is the powerful, and since the power and the powerful are always inseparable from each other, Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa are also inseparable from each other i. e. they are related through the inseparable relation called *samavāya*. Yet from the mythological or devotional point of view, Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī are treated as separate individualities. Nārāyaṇa is regarded as the resort of six divine qualities, namely, *jñāna* or omniscience, *aiśvarya* or power to control everything, *śakti* or power to make impossible possible, *bala* or strength to support the universe, *vīrya* or prowerss to subdue everything and *tejas* or energy to act untiringly. And since Lakṣmī is nothing but the power of Nārāyaṇa these six divine qualities are said to form the body of Lakṣmī.[12]

While representing the Pāñcarātra view of Parabrahman, it is held by some that the *nirguṇa* Brahman is naturally formless and the *saguṇa* Brahman is naturally endowed with individuality or form. And, as the description of the *nirguṇa* Brahman is more prominant in the Pāñcarātra philosophy, it is held by these thinkers that Pāñcarātra is more influenced by the theory of the qualityless and formless Brahman accepted by Śaṅkara. We however, think that this explanation is not in conformitly with the Vaiṣṇavite tradition. According to the Vaiṣṇavite tradition, there is no contradiction between qualityless-ness and qualified-ness, for in the Vaiṣṇavite view, 'qualityless' means not 'devoid of 'qualities', but 'devoid of *prākṛta* or worldy qualities'. Accordingly, though Śrī Kṛṣṇa is said to be endowed with the said six divine qualities and with individuality of form, he is always described as qualityless in the sense that he lies beyond the worldly qualities. The

Nirguṇa Brahman is not necessarily devoid of form, nor is it necessarily endowed with form : it may be both endowed with form and devoid of form. To the followers of the path of it is formless, while to the devotees, it is endowed with form. Hence, from the view-point of the Vaisnavite tradtion, the *nirguṇa* Brahman means that aspect of Brahman which is not connected with the cosmic activities, while *saguṇa* Brahman is that aspect of the same which is connected with the cosmic activities.

REFERENCES

1. sa vāsudevaḥ...nirguṇo guṇabhuk caiva—*Nār*, 339, 25-28.

2. nirguṇo niṣkalas caiva nirdvandvo niṣparigrahaḥ—*Nār*' 339.44 ; see also 334.29 ; 338.4.

3. triguṇa-vyatirikto vai—*Nār*, 334.30 ; sattvaṁ rajas tamas caiva na guṇas tam bhavanti vai—*Nār*. 339.22.

4. niṣkriyaḥ—*Nār*. 339.43 ; yo 'sau your hi sarvasya sthāvarasya carasya ed —*Nār*, 341. 15 ; sarva-bhūtātma-bhūto hi visudevaḥ—*Nār* ; 339.33 ; see also *Ibid*, 339.4 ; 348.12 ; 340.22 ; 342.25.

5. See *Nār*, 240.69 ; 337.61-2 ; 339.1,4 ; 342.39 ; 347.17 ; 345.6.

6. sa hi sarva-guṇas caiva nirguṇas caiva kathyate...*Nār*. 334 4 ; nirgunāya guṇātmane—*Nār*. 338.4 : nirguṇo guṇabhuk caiva—*Nār*. 339.28 ; nirguṇaṁ sagunaṁ ca—*Nār*. 351.18.

7. dhyāyet taṁ paramaṁ brahma paramātmānam īsvaram. nirīham atinirliptaṁ nirguṇam parkṛteḥ param—*NPR*, 1.1.4.

8. yathā hy-asi tvam avyakto hy-amūrto mūrtatām gataḥ—JS, 420 ; naiva bhāvo na cābhāvaḥ—*ABS*, 2.50 ; anāma-rūpa-saṁvedyam avāṅ-manasa-gocaram *ABS*, 2.6 ; sarva-kriyā-vinirmuktam—*JS*, 4.2, 61 ; sarva-karanam—*ABS*, 2.53 ; see also *ABS*, 2 6, 23, 47, 9, 50, 53 ; *JS*, 4.63 ; 5.29-30 ; *LT*, 1.1-10, 2.8, 10 ; *NPR*, 1.5.6 ; 2.3 19 ; *Padma saṁhitā*, 1.5.29-34.

9. jñānam eva paraṁ rūpaṁ brahmanaḥ paramātmanaḥ—*ABS*,2,62 ; jñānāya nistaraṅgāya—*LT*, |11 ; ānanda-lakṣanaṁ brahma—*JS*, 4.60 ; see also *ABS*, 2.24 ; *JS*, 4.65.

10. bhagavān nārāyano devo bhāvo lakṣmīr ahaṁ parā, lakṣmi-nārāyanā-khyātam ato brahma sanātanam—*LT*, 2.15.

11, tasya ca paramā saktiḥ.,..ahaṁ nārāyanī saktiḥ—*LT*, 2 11-12 ; īso

nārāyaṇo jñeyaḥ īsatā tasya cāpy-aham—*LT*, 314 ; mayā kṛtaṁ hi yat karma tena tat kṛtam ucyate—*LT*, 11.6 ; see also *ibid*, 3.14.

12. naiva saktya vinā kascie chaktimān-asti kāraṇam. na ca saktimatā saktir vinaikā vyavatiṣṭhate—*ABS*, 6.3 ; anyonyenāvinābhāvāt anyonycna samanvayāt. tādātmyaṁ viddhi [saṁbandham—*LT*, 2.17-18 ; viṣṇoḥ sarvāṅga-sampūrṇā bhāvābhāvā-nugāminī' Śakti nārāyaṇī divyā] [sarva-siddhānta-sammatā. ; devāc-ceaktimato-bhinnā brahmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ—*ABS*, 3.24-5 ; 6.25.

ON THE VAISNAVITE VIEW OF THE THREE ASPECTS OF THE ABSOLUTE—BRAHMAN, PARAMATMAN AND BHAGAVAT

SECTION

2

ON THE VAISNAVITE VIEW OF THE THREE ASPECTS OF THE ABSOLUTE—BRAHMAN, PARAMĀTMAN AND BHAGAVAT

A. *Bhaktivedanta*'s *Views*

1. "The constitution of Brahman is immortality, imperishability, eternity, and happiness. Brahman is the beginning of transcendental realization. Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is the middle, the second stage in transcendental realization and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate realisation of the Absolute Truth. Therefore, both Paramātmā and the impersonal Brahman are within the Supreme Person."—*BG*, 14.27.

2. "Absolute Truth is realization in three phases of understanding namely Brahman, or the impersonal all-pervasive spirit ; Paramātmā, or the localized aspect of the Supreme within the heart of all living entities ; and Bhagavān, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Kṛṣṇa."—*BG*, 2.3.

3. "These who are actually knowers of the Absolute Truth know that the Self is realized in three different phases, as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Bhagavān is the last word in the realization of the Absolute Truth."—*BG*, 13.12.

4. "Brahman is His trancendental bodily effulgence, and Paramātmā is His partial representation. As such,

Brahman or Paramātmā realization of the Absolute Truth is but a partial realization."—*CC*, 1.7.102.

5. "The first-class trancendentalists are the devotees who have realised the Supreme Person. The second-class transcendentalists are those who have partially realized the plenary portion of the absolute person. And the third-class transcendentalists are those who have barely realizated the spiritual focus of the absolute person. As Brahman and Paramātmā realization are imperfect realizations of the Absolute Truth, so the means of realizing Brahman and Paramātmā, i.e., the paths of *jñāna* and *yoga*, are also imperfect means of realizing the Absolute Truth. Devotional service, which is based on the foreground of full knowledge combined with detachment from material association fixed up on the aural reception of the Vedānta-śruti, is the only perfect method of realizing the Absolute Truth by the seriously inquisitive student. *CC*, 1.7.102.

6. "In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is said that the Absolute Truth is understood in three phases of realization : the impersonal Brahman, the localized Paramātmā and ultimately the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The impersonal Brahman and localized Paramātmā are expansions of the potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."—*CC*, 1.7.138.

7. "In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is said that the Absolute Truth is understood in three phases-namely, Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead (brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate). Thus the Supreme Personali by of Godhead is the last word in understanding the Absolute Truth, Brahman."—*CC*, 2.6.139.

B. *Our observations*

This gradation of the Absolute Reality into three stages is nowhere found in the early scriptures. In the well-known or principal Upaniṣads, the most common term used to denote the Absolute Reality is 'Brahman'. The term 'Ātman' is also used in quite a number of places in the same sense. The terms 'Īś' or 'Īśa', 'sat', 'Puruṣa' and 'Rudra' or 'Śiva' or 'Maheśvara' are also found here and there is the sense of the Absolute. The terms 'Paramātman' and 'Bhagavat' are however, not be found in these *Upaniṣads*. Let us quote a few lines from these *Upaniṣads* to establish our position :

1. satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma—*Tait.*, 2.1
2. Paraṁ cāparaṁ ca brahma—*Praśna*, 5.2
3. līnā brahmaṇi tatparāḥ—*Śvet*, 1.7
4. ayam ātmā brahma—*Br.*, 4.4.5
5. vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma—*Br.*, 3.9
6. sarvaṁ khalv-idaṁ brahma—*Chānd.* 3.14
7. tadeva brahma tvam viddhi—*Kena*, 1.5-9
8. vidāñcakāra brahmeti—*ibid*, 4.1
9. guhyaṁ brahma sanātanam—*Kaṭha.*
10. atra brahma samaśnute—*ibid*, 2.3.14
11. brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati—*Muṇḍaka*, 3.2.9
12. sarvaṁ hy-etad brahma—*Māṇḍūkya*, 2
13. ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān—*Tait.*, 2.4
14. mahāntaṁ vibhum ātmānam—*Kaṭha*, 1.2.22
15. ekas tathā sarva-bhūtāntarātmā—*ibid*, 2.2.9-11
16. tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute—*Muṇḍaka*, 3.2.3
17. sa ātmā sa vijñeyaḥ—*Māṇḍūkya*, 7
18. ātmana ākāśa sambhūtaḥ—*Tait.*, 2.1
19. ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt—*Ait.*, 1.1
20. sarva-vyāpinam ātmānam—*Śvet*, 1.16
21. ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ—*Br.* 2.4
22. īśā vāsyam idaṁ sarvam—*Īśa*, 1

23. īśam taṁ jñātvā 'mṛtā bhavanti—*Śvet.*, 3.7
24. sadeva somyedam agra āsīt—*Chānd.*, 6.2
25. puruṣān na paraṁ kiṁcit—*Kaṭha*, 1.3.11
26. divyo hy-amūrtaḥ puruṣaḥ—*Muṇḍaka*, 2.1.2
27. puruṣa evedaṁ viśvam—*ibid*, 2.1.10
28. sahasra-śīrṣā puruṣaḥ—*Śvet.*, 3.14
29. eko hi rudraḥ—*Śvet.* 3.2
30. māyinan tu maheśvaram—*ibid*, 4.10
31. yayā tad-akṣaram adhigamyate—*Muṇḍaka*, 1.1.5

In the *Yoga-Upaniṣads* and other source-works on *yoga*, the Absolute is denoted generally by the terms 'Paramātman', 'Brahman', 'Īśvara,' 'Parameśvara' and 'Śiva'. Let us quote a few passages :

1. śivena saha modate—*Yoga-Kuṇḍalī*, 1
2. paramātmani līnaṁ tat-paraṁ brahmaiva jāyate—*Yogatattva-Up.* 107
3. samādhiḥ samatāvasthā jīvā ma-paramātmanoḥ—*Yogatattva Up.*, 107
4. para-brahmaṇi līyeta—*ibid*, 108
5. sarvaṁ khalv-idaṁ brahma—*Nirālamba Up.*
6. vyāpakaḥ parameśvaraḥ—*Vijñāna-bhairava*, 107
7. saṁyogo yoga ity-ukto jīvātma-paramātmanoḥ—*Yogi-yājñavalkya.*
8. aikyaṁ brahmaṇi sambhavet—*Gheraṇḍa-saṁhitā*
9. jīvātma-paramātmanoh—*DattātreyaYogaśāstra.*
10. Īśvara-praṇidhānād vā—*Yoga-sūtra* 1.22

In the *Vaiṣṇava-Upaniṣads*, the Absolute is denoted by the terms 'Brahman', 'Paramātman', 'Nārāyaṇa', 'Viṣṇu', 'Puruṣa' and 'Ātman'. In the *Gopāla-Pūrva-tāpinī Upaniṣad* the Absolute is called 'Brahman' 'Kṛṣṇa' and 'Govinda'. To quote a few passages :

1. sahasra-śīrṣā puruṣaḍ—*Subāla Up.*, 1
2. brahmaiva san brahmāpy-eti—*ibid* 3
3. sarvaṁ nārāyaṇaḥ—*ibid*, 6
4. puruṣa evedaṁ sarvam—*ibid*, 6
5. sarva-loka ātmani brahmaṇi—*ibid*, 10
6. sa eva parameśvaraḥ—*Skanda Up.*, 5
7. pāśa-muktaḥ sadāsivaḥ—*ibid*, 7
8. bhagavantaṁ mahā-viṣṇum—*Tripād-vibhuti Up.*; 1
9. māyātītaṁ guṇātītaṁ brahma—*ibid*, 1
10. advaitam anirvācyaṁ brahma—*ibid*, 1
11. viṣṇu-sāyujyam āpnoti—*Vāsudeva Up.*,
12. eka ha vai nārāyaṇa āsīt—*Mahā Up.*, 1
13. tad brahmānandam advandvam—*ibid*, 4
14. ekam evādvayaṁ brahma—*Gopāla-uttara-tāpinī up.*
15. sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya Kṛṣṇāya—*Gopāla-pūrva-tāpinī up.*, 1
16. viśveśvarāya viśvāya govindāya—*ibid*, 2

In the Pāñcarātra literature, which, forms the foundation of all the later schools of Vaiṣṇavism the Absolute is denoted by the terms, 'Paramātman', 'Nārāyaṇa', 'Īśvara', 'Vāsudeva'' 'Bhagavat' and 'Brahman'. To quote a few passages—

1. tatra yaḥ paramātmā hi nityaṁ nirguṇaḥ smṛtaḥ. sa hi nārāyaṇo jñeyaḥ sarvātmā puruṣo hi saḥ—*Nārāyaṇīya*, 352.14
2. īśvaro hi jagat-sraṣṭā prabhur nārāyaṇa virāṭ—*ibid*, 384.12
3. yo vāsudevo bhagavān—*ibid*, 339.40
4. anādyantaṁ paraṁ brahma—*Ahirbudhya Saṁhitā*, II.6
5. jñānam eva daraṁ rūpaṁ brahmaṇaḥ, paramātmanaḥ—*ibid*, II. 62

6. paramaṁ brahma śāśvatam—*Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, IV, 2
7. nārāyaṇah paraṁ brahma—*Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā*, IV, 117
8. sa eve bhagavān devaḥ paramātmā jagad-guruḥ—*ibid*, II, 87
9. bhagavān nārāyano devaḥ—*Lakṣmī Tantra*, II, 15
10. nārāyaṇo hi viśvātma—*Mahābhārata, Śā..ti*, 334.8
11. kṣetrajñaś ceti kathyate—*ibid*, 334.30
12. puruṣottama—*ibid*, 338.4
13. sa vāsudevo vijñeyaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ—*ibid*, 339.25

In the *Brahma-Saṁhitā*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* and other *Vaiṣṇava-Purāṇas*, the Absolute is generally called 'Viṣṇu', 'Kṛṣṇa', 'Nārāyaṇa', 'Vāsudeva', 'Bhagavat', 'Puruṣottama', 'Brahman' and 'Paramātman'. Let us quote a few passages from the *Brahma-Saṁhita* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* :

1. īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ—*Brahma-Saṁhitā*
2. rūpaṁ yat tat prāhur-avyaktam ādyam/brahma jyotir nirguṇam nirvikāram/sattā-mātraṁ nirviśeṣaṁ nirīhaṁ/as tvaṁ sākṣād viṣṇur adhyātmadīpaḥ—*Bhāgavata*, 10.3.24
3. ādye parātmani tvayy—api māyi-māyini—*ibid*, 10.14.9
4. nārāyaṇas tvam—*ibid*, 10.14.14
5. bhagavān parātman—*ibid*, 10.14.21
6. tvam ātmānaṁ paraṁ matvā paramatmānam eva ca—*ibid*, 10.14.27
7. namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate—parāya paramātmane-brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye—*ibid*, 10.16.39-40

From the above, it is seen that the division of the Absolute into three stages is found nowwhere in the early scriptures.

Even in the Pāñcarātra literature and the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, the Lord or Kṛṣṇa is identified with Brahman and Paramātman. The very verse of the *Bhāgavata* on the basis of which this division is made (brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti kathyate —1.2.11) simply says that the *advaya-jñāna* or non-dual knowledge is called by these three names ; it does not say that these are different grades of the Absolute. That means, in all these scriptures. the terms 'Brahman', 'Paramātman' and 'Bhagavat' etc. have been used without any discrimination to denote the Absolute.

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* however, there are some hints to this division of thres gradeh of the Supreme. The well-known *parā-prakṛti,* which takes the form of the *jīvas* and governs the world (prakṛtim viddhi me parām. jīvabhūtaṁ mahāvāho yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat—*BG,* 7.5) is what is called Paramātman in Śrī Caitanya's philosophy. The same entity is caleed '*para avyakta*' also. The term '*adhiyajña*' de—noting an aspect of the Lord, existing within the living entities is also another name of this Paramātman. (adhiyajño' hum evātra dehe detabhṛtāṁ vara—*BG,* 8.4). The terms '*akṣara*' and '*Brahman*' used in some places of the *Gītā* denote the differenceless and formless Absolute (akṣaram brahma paramam—*BG,* 8,3, aad akṣaraṁ vedavido vadanti—*BG,* 8.11, avyakto' kṣaraḥ —*BG,* 8.21, ye tv-akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktam—*BG,* 12.3, anādimat paraṁ brahma na sat tan nāsad ucyate—*BG,* 13.12 ; brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham—*BG,* 14.27, akṣarād-api cottamaḥ—*BG,* 15.18). And the Absolute denoted by the terms 'Puruṣa. and 'Para-Puruṣa' of Uttama-Puruṣa' is what is called Bhagavat in Śrī Caitanya's philosophy (puruṣaś cādhidaivatam —*BG,* 8.4 ; 'puruṣah sa paraḥ'—*BG,* 8.22, 'uttamaḥ puruṣas tv-anyaḥ paramātmety-udāhṛtaḥ—puruṣotta maḥ'—*BG,* 15.17-18.) It is notable that Puruṣottama is also identified here with 'Paramātman'.

Vallabha, a predecessor of Śrī Caitanya, accepted these three gradations of the Absolute, primarily on the basis or the Gītā, in the following way: (1) Puruṣottama Kṛṣṇa or Parabrahman in whom all the aspects of *sat cit* and *ānanda* are manifest, is the highest aspect of the Absolute; it is the *ādhidaivika* or divine form of the Lord (2) Antaryāmin is the inner soul of all the living beings and the material world; it controls all these realities from within; in it all the aspects of *sat, cit* and *ānanda* are revealed. This is called the *ādhibhautika* or elemental aspect of the Absolute. (3) Akṣara is the qualityless and formless Brahman spoken of in the *Upaniṣads*, in which some amount of the aspect of bliss is obscured. This is called *ādhyātmika* of spiritual aspect of the Absolute. It is clear from the above that the three gradations of the Absolute accepted by Vallaba correspond, respectively, to Bhagavat, Paramātman and Brahman of the philosophy of Ś.ī Caitanya.

Thus we see that in the *Upaniṣads*, the Pāñcarātra literature and the *Purāṇas*, the gradation of the Absolute as Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat is not found. In the *Brahma-sūtra* of Vyāsa also nothing can be found on this issue. In all these scriptures, the terms 'Brahman', 'Paramātman', 'Puruṣa' etc. are used without any discrimination to denote the Absolute, personal or impersonal. The term 'Bhagavat' is however, seen to be kept reserved for the Personal form of the Absolute.

Now, the logic behind this gradation hinted in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and developed in the philosophies of Vallabha and Śrī Caitanya is this; Though the Absolute is one indivisible reality, it manifests itself in different ways. In one aspect, it manifests itself as the universal principle of consciousness simply forming the foundation of the whole universe. This aspect is infinite in nature and is qualityless, formless and actionless. In another aspect, the Absolute is the active governor of the univers of all the living and non-living beings. In still another aspect, the Absolute manifests itself as a Person qualified by all the superhuman qualities for the enjoyment of the devotees. As this Personal Absolute is nothing but the crystalised form of the impersonal Brahman, the followers of the paths of knowledge and *yoga* look upon it as a form adopted by Brahman for the sake of the devotees. And since the impersonal Brahman pervading the whole universe by its brilliance lies around this Personal Absolute, the devotees hold that the impersonal Absolute is the brilliance of the body of their Lord or Supreme Person. In reality, all these aspects are identical, and all are of the nature of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* ; they appear to be different from one another only in their way of manifestation. Accordingly, the attainment of any of these three forms certainly brings forth liberation. All the scriptures are unanimous on this that the realisation of either the quality-less and formless Brahman or of the Antaryamin or Inner spirit of beings or of the Personrl Brahman or Bhagavat leads the aspirants to liberation ; there should not be the least possible doubt in this matter. The difference in the forms of liberation attained through the pursuance of these different aspects of the Absolute lies simply in the ways of tasting or experiencing the Absolute. Hence none of these aspects should be looked upon as inferior to the other two aspects.

Now, the devotees being attached to the Personal form of the Absolute have the right to prefer that aspect to the other ones, but to criticise the followers of the other aspects as misled or even of lower status is to cross the limit of the scriptural boundary, Hence, the views of the Vaiṣṇavas that the realisation of the Absolute as Brahman or Paramātman is imperfect and that the paths of *jñāna* and *yoga* are also imperfect ways of realising the Absolute Truth speak simply of their partial and uncatholic attitude.

ON THE ADVAITA VEDANTIC CONCEPT OF THE FORMLESS AND IMPERSONAL BRAHMAN

SECTION

3

ON THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC CONCEPT OF THE FORMLESS AND IMPERSONAL BRAHMAN

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Comments*

1. "What the *Upaniṣads* describe as the impersonal Brahman is but the effulgence of His body, and the Lord known as the Supersoul is but His localized plenary portion. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, full with six opulences. He is the Absolute Truth, and no other truth is greater than or equal to Him."—*CC*, 1.1.3.

2. "The impersonal glowing effulgence known as impersonal Brahman is the outer space of the Vaikuṇṭha planets in the spiritual sky. Beyond that impersonal Brahman is the great Causal Ocean, which lies between the material and spiritual skies. The material nature is a by-product of this Causal Ocean."—*CC*, 1.5.51.

3. "Outside the Vaikuṇṭha planets is the impersonal Brahman effulgence, and beyond that effulgence is the Kāraṇa Ocean, or Causal Ocean."—*CC*, 1.5.51.

4. "The Māyāvādī sannyāsis are *asuraṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ*, which means that they have taken the path of the *asuras* (demons) who do not believe in the existence of the form of the Lord. The Māyāvādīs say that the ultimate source of everything is impersonal, and in this way they deny the existence of god. Saying

that there is no God is direct denial of God, and saying that God exists but has no head, legs and hands and cannot speak, hear or eat is a negative way of denying His existence."—*CC*, 1.7.99.

5. "The foolish conclude that the Lord has no separate existence because He has distributed Himself in an impersonal form ; the impersonal Brahman, however, cannot possess energies. There are hundreds and thousands of references, however, to Viṣṇu-māyā (*parāsaya śaktiḥ*), or the energy of Lord Viṣṇu."—*CC*, 1.7.115.

6. "Similarly, it is stated that just as everything in the material world exists in the sunshine, which is the energy of the sun, so everything exists on the basis of the spiritual and material energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Thus although Kṛṣṇa is situated in His own abode (goloka eva nivasaty-akhilātma-bhūtoḥ) where He enjoys His transcendental pastimes with the cowherd boys and gopis. He is nevertheless present everywhere, even within the atoms of this universe."—*CC*, 1.7.120.

7. "The impersonal *brahmajyoti* rests on the personal form of the Lord. Therefore although the impersonal effulgence, the *brahmajyoti*, is the first realization, one must enter into it, as mentioned in the *Īśopanisad*, to find the Supreme Person, and then one's knowledge is perfect."—*CC*, 1.7.140.

8. "Māyāvādī philosophers are satisfied simply to under stand Brahman to be the sum-total of knowledge."—*CC*, 1.7.141.

9. "Again, Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā* māyā tatam

idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā. "By me, in My unmanifested form this entire universe is pervaded". (BG. 9.4). His all-pervasive feature is understood to be impersonal because one does not find the form of the Lord in that all pervasiveness. Actually, everything is resting on the rays of His bodily effulgence."
—*CC*, 2.6.143.

10. "If the Supreme Personality of Godhead is formless, how can He be said to walk very fast and accept everything offered to Him ? Rejecting the direct meaning of the Vedic *mantras*, the Māyāvādī philosophers interpret them and try to establish the Absolute Truth as formless. Actually, the Supreme Lord has an eternal, personal form, full of all opulence. The Māyāvādī philosophers try to interpret the Absolute Truth as being without potency"—*CC*, 2.6.152.

11. "Māyāvāda philosophy holds that the real Nārāyaṇa does not move because, being impersonal, he has no legs."—*CC*, 2.10.109.

12. "Because they are constantly blaspheming the Supreme personality of Godhead by sying that He has no head, hands or legs, Māyāvādī philosophers remain offenders for many many births, even though they have partially realized Brahman."—*CC*, 2.17.143.

13. "The potency of Kṛṣṇa that is spread everywhere is impersonal. The sunlight is the impersonal expansion of the sun globe and the sun-god. If we simply take one side of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—His impersonal effulgence—that one side does not fully explain the Absolute Truth. Impersonal appreciation of the Absolute Truth is one-sided and incomplete. One

should also accept the other side, the personal side—Bhagavān."—*CC*, 2.25.33.

14. "For such materialistic men, the form of the gigantic material manifestation is supreme. Consequently they consider the Supreme to be impersonal. And because they are too materially absorbed, the conception of retaining the personality after liberation from matter frightens them. ...they become afraid of becoming persons again, and so they naturally prefer a kind of merging into the impersonal void."—*BG*, 4.10.

15. "The impersonalist puts more stress on the word *arūpam*. But this *arūpam* is not impersonal. It indicaties the transcendental form of eternity, bliss and knowledge as described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*."—*BG*, 7.7.

16. "Brahman is indestructible and eternally existing, and its constitution is not changed at any time. But beyond Brahman there is Parabrahman. Brahman refers to the living entity and Parabrahman refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In Vedic literature the living entity is called jīvātmā and Brahman but he is never called Parabrahman."—*BG*, 8.3.

17. "This verse (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, 14.27) unequivocally declares that Brahman is Lord Kṛṣṇa's bodily effulgence."—*SOK*, p. 36.

B. *Our observations*

1. In reality, the Supreme Person is but a crystalised form of the Absolute ; the Paramātman, in the sense of Antaryāmin or the Inner controller of the *jīvas*, is a limited manifestation of the same Absolute ; and the

Impersonal Brahman or Paramātman of Advaita Vedānta is also the same Absolute in its actionless, qualityless, formless and all-pervasive nature. These are but different manifestations of the same Reality, and, in essence, there is not the least possible difference between them, their differences lying only in their outward manifestations. And from the viewpoint of these manifestations, the devotees attached to the Personal Absolute may think that the formless Brahman pervading the universe by its brilliance and lying around the Supreme Person or crystalised form of the Absolute is the luster of the body of their Supreme Person and the Inner Controller is a partial manifestation of the same Person. (See Note, Section—2).

2-3 (a) From the view-point of the Devotees attached to the Supreme Person, the Impersonal Brahman may be called the lustre lying around the Lord and His spiritual lands. Vallabha is, however, more logical in holding that the spiritual land of the Lord is itself a form of the Impersonal Brahman.

(b) This Causal Ocean or Kāraṇārṇava is identical with Saṁkhya's prakṛti, the all-pervasive material energy which evolves into the material world.

4. (a) The Advaitins certainly accept the existence of the Personal form of the Lord (See Note under Section—1).

(b) To say that 'Brahman cannot eat or walk or receive things since it is devoid of mouth, legs and hands, is a mere caricature. The evaluation of such a caricature is left to the readers. This much we can say that, though devoid of organs in their material senses, Brahman can do everything.

(c) BV has abused the advaitins hundred times as *asūras* or demons. Philosophically, we are not concerned with these abuses.

5. (a) The Advaitins never argue that the Absolute cannot have a form, as it has distributed ifself in an impersonal form. The Brahman of the Advaitins can take any form since it is the source of everything.

(b) The advaitins do not say that the Impersonal Brahman cannot possess energies. In their view, the same Reality may exist as devoid of energies or as endowed with energies. The Vaiṣṇava concept of *svarūpa-śakti* or essential power of the Lord has been included by the advaitins in the essence of Brahman, in which the qualities and the qualified cannot be distinguished from each other. And again, the Vaiṣṇava concept of external or material power has been attributed by the Advaitins to Īśvara, the World-Governor. This Īśvara of the Advaitins is identical with the Paramātman of the Vaiṣṇavas, who, being endowed with the material power, is entrusted with the act of guiding the world.

6. This position will be presented by the Advaitins in this ways: Though Brahman or the Impersonal Absolute is all-pervasive and is present everywhere as the foundation of all entities, it assumes a Personal form for the sake of supra-mundane sports with the devotees.

7. Realisation of the Impersonal Brahman and that of the Personal Brahman are not two stages or steps but two different ways of realising the same Absolute. The *Upaniṣads* do not make and distinction between

the Personal Brahman and the Impersonal Brahman. And, accordingly, the view that the realisation either of the Impersonal Brahman or of the Personal Brahman marks some stage or step of spiritual uplift is quite foreign to the *Upaniṣads*.

8. No, for the Advaitins, Brahman is not merely the sum-total of knowledge : it is of the merely the existence, knowledge and bliss.

9. See obs. 6 under this Section.

10-11. See obs. 4 and 6 under this Section and Note under Section—1.

12. See obs. 4 under this Section and obs. 17 under Section—6.

13. See obs. 6 and 7 under this Section and Note under Section—1.

14. (a) The Advaitins are spiritualists in the full sense of the term ; to explain them as materialists is absurd.

(b) There is no proof in favour of the view that the Advaitins are afraid of retaining personality. The Advaitins desire to merge into the Impersonal Brahman, since they prefer this form of the Absolute to that of the Personal Brahman.

(c) Śaṅkara clearly says that if the aspirant wants to retain his form, he may have some form, and if he wants to dismiss his form, he may remain formless (yadā saśarī-ratāṁ kalpayati tadā saśarīro bhavati, yadā tv-aśarīratāṁ tadā aśarīraḥ—BSŚB, 4.4.12).

(d) To describe the Impersonal Brahman as 'void' is quite contradictory to the total philosophy of

Advaitism. Brahman is infinite existence, consciousness and bliss ; it is never void.

15. There is nothing to be afraid of the emphasis given by the Advaitins on the term *'arūpam'*, for, according to the Advaitins, though Brahman is devoid of form, it assumes forms for the devotees (See Note under Section—1).

16. Nowhere in the Vedic literature the living entity has been called Brahman. The living entity is called 'jīvātman' or 'ātman', while the Absolute is denoted by such terms as 'Brahman', 'Ātman', 'Parabrahman', 'Paramatman' and so on.

17. The verse referred to here is : "brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham"—*BG*, 14.27. Our comments on this verse will be found in the Note below.

Note :

The Impersonal Brahman accepted by the Advaita Vedāntins as the Absolute is looked upon by the Vaiṣṇavites as the *aṅgajyotis* or the bodily luster of Bhagavat or Kṛṣṇa the Personal Absolute. In the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra*, however, not a single word is to be found in favour of this view. All the *Vedaṣ*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra* uniformly hold that Brahman or Parabrahman or Paramātman, the Absolute, may reveal itself either in a Personal form or in an Impersonal form. Nowhere in the fundamental works of *Veda* and Vedānta mentioned above, it is said that the Personal God or Bhagavat is the 'real' Absolute and that the Impersonal Brahman is the bodily lustre of that Bhagavat.

BV is of the view that the verse brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham (*BG*, 14.27) unequivocally says that the Impersonal Brahman is the bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa. or Bhagavat. But in our opinion, this verse cannot necessarily be held to maintain this view. Here we may consider the following points :

(a) The term '*pratiṣṭhā*' means 'foundation' or 'support'. And the Lord may be called the foundation or support of Brahman, because it is through the knowledge of the Lord or Personal Brahman that we are informed of the nature of the Impersonal Brahman.

(b) In the *Tait. Upaniṣad,* Brahman has been declared as the *pratiṣṭhā* or foundation of everything (brahma pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā—*Tait. Up.*, 2.5). It cannot be argued that here Brahman means the Personal Brahman, because the context demands that here Brahman denotes simply the 'Absolute' and not necessarily the Personal Absolute.

We do not, however, mean to say that the Vaiṣṇavite view mentioned above is without any ground. Spiritual aspirants being endowed with different *rucis* or tastes, some of them desire to realise the Absolute in an Impersonal form and some others, in a Personal form. We may here refer to the oft-quoted verse from some hymn to Śiva, which runs as follows : "rucīnaṁ vaicitryād ṛju-kuṭila-nānā-pathayuṣāṁ nṛṇām eko gantavyas tvam asi payasām arṇava iva"—',You alone are the goal to be attained by persons following different paths—straight or curved—because of the difference of tastes, just as the sea is the goal of all the river-waters." And the aspirants attached to the Impersonal form of the Absolute may hold that Bhagavat, the Supreme Person, is a crystalised form of the Impersonal Absolute, while those attached to the Personal Absolute may regard the formless Brahman pervading the whole universe by its brilliance and lying around the Supreme Person or crystalised form of the Absolute to be the lustre of the body of that Supreme Person.

is the bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa, or Bhagavat. But in our opinion, this verse cannot necessarily be held to maintain this view. Here we may consider the following points:

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ON THE ADVAITIC CONCEPT OF THE IDENTITY BETWEEN THE SELF AND BRAHMAN

SECTION

4

OF THE ADVAITIC CONCEPT OF THE IDENTITY BETWEEN THE SELF AND BRAHMAN

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Comments*

1. “After passing through the entire material atmosphere, one can come to the luminous spiritual sky, whose impersonal effulgence is known as Siddhaloka. Māyāvādī philosophers who aspire to merge with the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as well as demoniac persons such as Kaṁsa and Śiśupāla who are killed by Kṛṣṇa enter that Brahman effulgence. Yogis who attain oneness through meditation according to the Patañjali Yoga system also reach Siddhaloka.” —*CC*, 1.5.39.

2. “As a part can never be equal with the whole, so a living entity, as a minute fragment of the spiritual whole, cannot be equal at any time to the Supreme Whole, the Absolute Personality of Godhead. Although the Supreme Lord and the living entities are quantitatively related as the whole and the parts, the parts are nevertheless qualitatively one with the whole.”—*CC*. 1.5.66

3. ‘Māyāvādī philosophers think that after giving up their bodies they are going to become Nārāyaṇa by merging with His body.”—*CC*, 1.7.70

4. “Monist philosophers like Śaṅkarācārya and his

followers want to establish that God and the living entity are one, and instead of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead they present themselves as God. They want to be worshiped as God by others," —*CC*, 1.7.101.

5. "Since their philosophy declares that Nārāyaṇa and an ordinary human being are both on the same level, they sometimes use the term *daridranārāyaṇa* ("poor Nārāyaṇa"), which was invented by a so-called Svāmī who did not know anything about Vedānta philosophy" —*CC*. 1,7.103.

6. "Māyāvādi philosphers claim to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this has no meaning. But Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never uttered such nonsence."—*CC*, 1.7.105.

7. Therefore the Hare Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the only light for the foolish living entities who think either that there is no God or that if God exists He is formless and they themselves are also God. These misconceptions are very dangerous, and the only way to counteract them is to spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement,"—*CC*, 1.7.120.

8. "The Māyāvāda philosophy misleads one to defy the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and pose oneself as the Supreme Lord. Thus it has misguided hundreds and thousands of innocent men —*CC*, 1.7.120.

9. "Unfortunately, the Māyāvāda philosophy, misguiding people by claiming the living entity to be the Lord, has created havoc throughout the entire world and led almost everyone to godlessness. By thus covering the

glories of the Supreme Lord, the Māyāvādī philosophers have done the greatest disservice to human society. It is to counteract these most abominable activities of the Māyāvādī philosophers that Lord Caitanya has introduced the Here Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.*" —*CC*, 1.7.120.

10. "The Māyāvāda philosophy is so degraded that it has taken the insignificant living entities to be the Lord, the Supreme Truth, thus convering the glory and supremacy of the Absolute Truth with monism."—*CC*, 1.7.120.

11. "In all Vedic scriptures the *jīva-tattva*, the truth of the living entities, is mentioned to be one of the energies of the Lord. If one does not accept the living entity to be a minute, infinitesimal spark of the Supreme but equates the *jīva-tattva* with the supreme Brahman or Supreme Personality of Godhead, it must be understood that his entire philosophy is based on a misunderstanding. Unfortunately, Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācarya purposely claimed the *jīva-tattva*, or living entities, to be equal to the Supreme God. Therefore his entire philosophy is based on a misunderstanding, and it misguides people to become atheists whose mission in life is unfulfilled".—*CC*. 1.7,120.

12. "The living entity is originally spiritual, and when he enters the spiritual world or the body of the Supreme Lord, he still retains his identity as an individual soul." Merging in the material or spiritual energies, therefore, does not involve loss of individuality.—*CC*, 1.7.121.

13. "Māyāvādis do not have knowledge even of their relationship with God. They wrongly think that every-

one is God or that everyone is equal to God. Therefore, since the real position of the living entity in not clear to them, how can they advance further ?"—CC, 1. 7. 142.

14. "The ambitions Māyāvādī philosophers desire to merge into the existence of the lord, and this may be accepted as *sāyujya-mukti.* However, this form of *mukti* means denying one's individual existence. In other words, it is a kind of spiritual suicide. This is absolutely opposed to the philosophy of *bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga* offers immortality to the individual conditioned soul. If one follows the Māyāvādī philosophy, he misses his opportunity to become immortal after giving up the material body. The immortality of the individual person is the highest perfectional stage a living entity can attain." —CC, 1.6.169.

15. "Māyāvādī philosophers think that the living entity is identical with the Supreme Soul, Brahman. Their commentaries on *Vedānta-sūtra* are completely opposed to the principle of devotional service."—CC, 2.6.169.

16. "Actually an ordinary human being cannot become Nārāyaṇa. Even the chief Māyāvādī *sannyāsi,* Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, says, '*nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktat*'. "Nārāyaṇa is not a creation of this material world. Nārāyaṇa is above the material creation."—CC, 2.18.109.

17. "Due to their poor fund of knowledge, Māyāvādī *sannyāsis* think that Nārāyaṇa, the Absolute Truth, taken birth as a human being and that when He realizes this, He becomes Nārāyaṇa again. They never consider why Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accepts an inferior position as a human being and then again becomes Nārāyaṇa when He is perfect. Why

should Nārāyaṇa be imperfect ? Why should He appear as a human being ?"—*CC*, 2.18.109.

18. Māyāvādī *sannyāsis* consider themselves Brahman, and they superficially speak of themselves as Nārāyaṇa. When the Māyāvādīs accept *sannyāsa* and consider themselves Nārāyaṇa, they become so puffed up that they do not even enter the temple of Nārāyaṇa to offer respects, for they falsely think themselves Nārāyaṇa himself."—*CC*, 2.18.113.

19. "The word pāṣaṇḍī refers to one who considers the living entity under the control of the illusory energy to be equal with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is transcendental to the material qualities."—*CC*, 2. 18. 115.

20. "Those who try to avoid fruitive activity and who become silent in order to merge into the spiritual existence of the Absolute Truth are generally known as jñānīs, wise men. They are not interested in fruitive activity but in merging into the Supreme."—*CC*, 2.19.147.

21. "The jñānīs maintain that fruitive activity is imperfect. For them, perfection is the cessation of work and the merging into the supreme existence."—*CC*, 2.19.147.

22. "All these individuals are working in the material world for sense gratification, and under the spell of material energy they are thinking of being enjoyers. This mentality is dragged to the last point of liberation when the living entity wants to become one with the Lord. This is the last snare of māyā, or sense-gratificatory illusion, and it is only after many, many births of such sense-gratificatory activities that a great soul surrenders unto Vāsudeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa, thereby fulfilling the search after the ultimate truth."—*BG*, 2.39.

23. "But others, who worship the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth and regard the forms of the demigods as temporary, sacrifice their individual selves in the supreme fire and thus end their individual existences by merging into the existence of the Supreme."—*BG*, 4.25.

24. "The concept of oneness with Kṛṣṇa is incorrect because the part cannot be equal to the whole."—*BG*, 5.3.

25. "The soul and the Supersoul within the body are of the same spiritual quality. The similarity in the quality of the soul and the Supersoul, however, does not make them equal in quantity, for the individual soul is present only in that particular body whereas the Paramātmā is present in each and every body."—*BG*, 5.18.

26. "The monists do not accept this transcendental pleasure, out of fear jeopardizing the theory of oneness. The duality of knowledge and knower in not accepted by the nondualist."—*BG*, 6.23.

27. "It is said in the Vedic literature, *brahmaiva san brahmāpy eti*. One can attain the Supreme Brahman by becoming Brahman. This means that one must qualitatively become one with Brahman. By attainment of Brahman, one does not lose his eternal Brahman identity as an individual soul."—*BG*, 14.25.

28. "The only ones who will not accept this truth are those who are inimical toward Lord Kṛṣṇa and who want to by the Supreme Lord themselves because of a perverted mind. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11). Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form." Such men are envious of the Lord. The truth about

Lord Kṛṣṇa and His trancendental position can never enter such confused and deluded brains."—*SOK*, P. 32.

29. "They exist at a level of realization far above the impersonal realization of the Absolute, for they are free from the contamination of vainly trying to merge with the Supreme and usurping His Absolute position." —*SOK*, P. 36.

30. "Yet frequently these *sannyāsis* devolop one major fault they consider themselves God. They misinterpret the meaning of the Vedic phrase *ahaṁ brahmāsmi*, "I am Brahman," and thus they cannot realize pure knowledge of Brahman."—*SOK*, p. 73.

31. "No matter how clearly one explains these truths, ordinary people cannot absorb them, due to their tiny dog's-bent-tail intelligence. Thus they embrace monistic, impersonal philosophy. Denying that Lord Kṛṣṇa along is God, they insist that they are also "God."—*SOK*, p. 97.

32. "Lord Viṣṇu's impersonal aspect is known as Brahman. So when the *jīva*-soul, a product of Lord Viṣṇu's superior, spiritual energy, attains *sāyujya-mukti*, or liberation by merging with Brahman, it is not at all surprising"—*SOK*, p. 122

33. "The impersonalists are obsessed with the idea that the Supreme Being is impersonal and that the final goal is to merge into the Brahman existence. Naturally the Lord does not object. If a patient wants to end his disease by ending his life, then who will suffer but he ?"—*SOK*, p. 124.

34. "According to the impersonalists, the infinitesimal *jīva* merges into the infinite Brahman at the time of

liberation. But such merging does not affect the infinite in any way, Unfortunately, the impersonalists are oblivious of the tremendous damage such liberation causes to the infinitesimal living entity."—*SOK*, p. 134.

35. "*Sālokya* means that after material liberation one is promoted to the planet where the Supreme Personality of Godhead resides. *Sāmīpya* means remaining an associate of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Sārūpya* means attaining a fourhanded form exactly like that of the Lord. *Sārṣṭi* means attaining opulences like those of the Supreme Lord, and *sāyujya* means merging into the Brahman effulgence of the Lord. These are the five types of liberation."—*CC*, 2.6.266.

B. *Our observations*

1. (a) See obs. 35 under Section-6 and obs. 2 under Section-1

(b) The Advaita Vedāntins and the Yogins certainly attain the Impersonal Brahman. In our view, however, this Impersonal Brahman is not the luster of the Supreme Person, but his formless form.

2. See Note at the bottom of this Section.

3. The followers of the path of knowledge may merge into the Impersonal Brahman or into the body of the Supreme Person, according to their choice. Merger of the self into the body of the Lord is called *Iśvara-sāyujya*. Saṅkara has spoken of this Īśvara-sāyu*jya* in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra.* 4.4, 1-7. Some devotees may not like it, but scriptures speak of such a form of liberation. Śrī Caitanya also has accepted the existence of such a form of liberation (*CC*, 2.6).

4. See Note at the bottom.

5. (a) See Note of the bottom.

(b) BV seems to be referring here to Svami Vivekananda who used the term *'daridra-nārāyaṇa'*, while advising people to serve the poor with the idea of service to the Lord. If it be so, and if Svami Vivekananda is said to be knowing nothing about Vedānta, then we may simply express our utter surprise.

6. No Advaitin claims that he is the Supreme Person. (See Note at the bottom).

7. (a) There is no mistake in accepting the Absolute as formless, for the Absolute is both formless and endowed with form (See Note 1, Section-1).

(b) The Advaitins never think themselves as God (See Note, under this Section).

8. See Note under this Section and Section-1.

9. (a) The Advaitins never regard the living entity as identical with God.

(b) To declare the philosophy of the Advaitins as 'abominable' is based purely on the misinterpretation of the Advaitic philosophy.

(c) Śrī Caitanya introduced the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahāmantra* to attract the people to the path of devotion which suits best to human psychology.

10. See Note at the bottom.

11. (a) No Advaitin ever identifies the living entity with the Supreme Person (See Note under this Section).

(b) For our responses to the view that the individual self is an atomic part of the Absolute, See Note under Section-9.

12. When the individual self attains liberation, it may merge into the body of the Absolute or may retain its individuality, according to the self's choice or liking. This view has been expressed by both Śaṅkara, the Advaitin, and Baladeva, the follower of Śrī Caitanya, on the same grounds that (a) at the level of liberation there is nothing to stand against the self in fulfilling its desire and that (b) desire may vary from person to person. "Yadā saśarīratāṁ samkalpayati tadā saśarīro bhavati, yadā tv-aśarīratāṁ tadā aśarīra iti, satyasaṁkalpatvāt samkalpa-vaicitryāc-ca"—*BSŚB*, 4.4.12—"When the liberated self intends to have a form, it is endowed with a form, and when it intends to have no form, it becomes formless, since it has the capability to do accordiug to its free will and since the selves are endowed with different wills." "Muktāḥ khalu-brahma-vidyayā saṁchinna-piddhānāḥ satya-saṁkalpāś ca bhavanti, teṣu ye vigrahādi-lipsavaḥ te saṁkalpād eva tad-vantaḥ syuḥ"—Baladeva's comt. *Sūksmā* on *BS*, 4.4.12. (For the meaning, see Note. Section-4).

13. See Note under this Section.

14. (a) Surprisingly, BV has accepted here that the Advaitins attain the *sāyujya* form of liberation, which he denied at so many places in strong-worded language.

(b) Merger into the bosom of Brahman does not at all mean spiritual suicide, rather, it is immortality in every sense, for the self in this state realises in full the bliss of the Absolute. Moreover, according to the Advaitins also, the self may be said to be retaining some sort of difference in liberation. (See Note under this Section.).

15. (a) The Advaitins do not say that the living entity is identical with Brahman. (See Note under this Section.)

(b) Advaitic views are not at all against devotional service. (See Note under Section-5).

16-18. See Note under this Section.

19. See obs. 28, Section-6 and Note under this Section.

20-21. It is notable that here BV contradicts his own veiws for at some other places he described the Advaitins as pursuing fruitive activity. (See obs. 23,, Section.1)

22. (a) The will to be one with the Absolute can in no sense be criticised as something prompted by the desire of sense-gratification.

(b) This is not at all an illusion, for the followers of this path actually realise identity between the self and Brahman and attain liberation. (See Note under this Section).

(c) The question of taking many more births does not arise at all in the case of those aspirants who realise Brahman, for such aspirants attain liberation which means going beyond the cycle of birth and death.

23. See obs.. 14 under this Section.

24. See Note 3 (b) under this Section.

25. So long as the self is bound by the mind-body conditions, it is limited and is manifested in a particular body, but when it is freed from the mind-body conditions, it realises its identity with Paramātman. Such a self is not limited by and mind-body condition.

26. The Advaitins certainly accept transcendental bliss for the liberated self, for liberation means realisation of Brahman which is of the nature of unlimited bliss. Thus, the theory of oneness is definitely not opposed to the realisation of bliss.

27. Brahman being an indivisible reality, the idea of quantitative difference does not arise when the self realises its identity with Brahman. Hence, if any quantitative difference is accepted in this stage, that will have to be regarded as imposed by the free will of the self. (See Note under Section-1).

28. (a) The idea of oneness with the Absolute, supported by the *Upaniṣads* in clear termes, cannot at all be looked upon as a mark of perverted mind.

(b) The Advaitins never deride the Personal Absolute—Kṛṣṇa or Śiva.

(c) The Advaitins accepting both the Impersonal Absolute and the Personal Absolute or Kṛṣṇa can never be held as having confused and deluded brains

29. (a) Realisation of the Personal Absolute may be regarded as higher than the realisation of the Impersonal Absolute from the view-point of devotion. In our view, however, these two are but two ways—and not levels—of realising the same Reality.

(b) Endeavour to merge with the Absolute is not vain, since it is realisable to the aspirants.

(c) The Advaitins do never usurp the position of the Personal Absolute (See Note, Section 1).

30-31. See Note under this Section.

32. It is a good sign that here BV describes Brahman as the impersonal aspect of Brahman, the Absolute, and accepts merger of the self into Brahman as a fact.

33-34. This comment originates from the wrong idea that merger into the Absolute means putting an end to one's existence. (See obs. 14 and Note under this Section).

35. It is notable that here BV accepts the *sāyujya* form of liberation in which the self merges into Brahman.

Note :

1. Identity between the self and Brahman has been declared by all the *Upaniṣads* and other scriptures including those of Pāñcarātra and Vaiṣṇavite Purāṇas. Accordingly, the concept of identity betwen the self and Brahman cannot be regarded as anti-Vedic. To establish our position, let us quote a few passages from the said scriptures as follows :

(1) neha, nānā'sti kiñcana (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* 2.1.11)—There is no multiplicity here.

(2) brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* 3.2.9)—One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman

(3) tad brahmāhman iti jñātvā sarva-bandhair vimucyate

(*Kaivalya Upaniṣad*)—Knowing oneself as Brahman, one is freed from all bonds.

(4) ayam ātmā brahma (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad,* 2 ; } *Bṛ Upaniṣad,* 4.4.5)—This self is Brahman.

(5) tat tvam asi (*Ch. Upanisads,* 6.8.7)—You (the self) are that (Brahman),

(6) ahaṁ brahmāsmi (*Bṛ Upaniṣad,* 1.4.10)—I am Brahman.

(7) paramātmani līnaṁ tat paraṁ brahmaiva jāyate (*Yoga-kuṇḍalī upaniṣad,* 3.24)—The self merged in the Absolute becomes the Absolute.

(8) brahmaivāham iti jñātvā vīta-śoko bhaven muniḥ (*Mahā up.,* 4.25)—Knowing himself as identical with Brahman, the aspirant should be free from sorrow.

(9) brahmaivāsmi nirāmayam (*ibid,* 5.69)—I am Brahman free from sorrow.

(10) so 'ham ity-ātmānam ādāya manasā aikyaṁ kuryāt, ātmano gopālo' ham iti bhāvayet (*Gopālottara-tāpinī upaniṣad,* 15) (The aspirant) should think of identity as 'I am he' ; he should think, 'I am Gopāla'.

(11) sa samyag jñānaṁ ca labdhvā viṣṇu-sāyujyam āpnoti (*Vāsudeva upaniṣad*)—Having attained proper knowledge, he attains oneness with Viṣṇu.

(12) abheda-darśanaṁ jñānam (*Mudgala upaniṣad* 2.2)—Jñāna means realisation of identity.

(13) dehe mṛte jīvo brahma sampadyate punah (*Bhāgavata,* 12.5.5)—After the destruction of the body, the self becomes Brahman again.

(14) sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yet brahmātmaikatva- lokṣaṇam (*ibid*, 12.13.12)—The significance of the whole of Vedānta is the identity between Brahman and the self.

(15) brahmābhinnāt ta to jñānāt brahma saṁyujyate param (*Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, 4.50)—As a result of the knowledge of non-difference, (the *jīva*) becomes identical with Brahman, the Absolute.

(16) iñānena tad-abhinnena—jāyate brahma-saṁsaktiḥ (*Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, 4.38)—From that knowledge of non-difference, arises oneness with Brahman.

(17) abhede muktir-atyantam aikyaṁ syāt para-jīvayoḥ (*Padma Saṁhitā*)—From the non-difference between the Absolute and the self, arises liberation which means total identity or oneness.

(18) muktasya na bhedo 'sti bheda-hetor-abhāvataḥ (*ibid*, 12.65)—The liberated one has no difference (from the Absolute), because of the absence of the cause of difference.

(19) brahmany-ekātmatāṁ yāti (*Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, 3.22) —(The self) becomes one with Brahman.

2. (a) In the *Brahma-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa, we find that some *sūtras* speak of difference between Brahman and the *jīva*, some other *sūtras* favour non-difference, while still other sutras show the relation to be one of both difference and non-difference.

Sūtras speaking of difference between Brahman and the giva are the following : (1) 'netaro' nupapatteḥ' (1. 1. 16)= The Blissful is not *itara* or the other, as it is not reasonable. Here 'the other' means the *jīva* as distinct from the Blissful or Brahman. (2) 'bheda-vyapadeśāc ca' (1.1.17)=Also from the mention of difference, it is known that the *jiva* is not the blissful i.e. Brahman. This *sūtra* refers to a passage of the *Tait. Up.* which says: The Blissful is different from the *jiva*; the *jīva* becomes blissful after attaining that Blissful. (3) 'bheda-vyapadeśāc cānyaḥ' (1.1.21)=From the mention of difference in the *Ch. up.* (1.6.6-7), Brahman existing in the midst of Āditya is known to be different from the *jīva.* (4) 'anupapattes tu na śarirah' (1.2.3)=Brahman is not the embodied self, as it cannot be established by reason, (5) 'karma-kartṛ-vyapadeśāc ca' (1.2.4)=From the mention of Brahman as the *karman* or object to be attained and the *jīva* as the *kartṛ* or the agent of attainment, Brahman is known to be different from the self. (6) 'guhāṁ praviṣṭāv ātmānu hi tad-darśanāt' (1.2.11)=The two that entered the *guha* or cave of intellect are surely two selves, as the *Śruti* says so. This *sūtra* refers to the *Kaṭha up.* (1.3.1) which says that two selves entered the body. (7) 'Śārīraścobhaye' pi hi bhedenainam .ādhīyate (1.2.20)=The *antaryāmin* or inner self is not the jīva, for both the branches of Kāṇva and Mādhyandina describe the *jīva* as distinct from the inner self. (8) 'viśeṣaṇa-bheda-vyapadeśābhyāṁ ca netarau' (1.2.22)=From the attributes and also from the mention of difference, Akṣara or Brahman, the source of all beings, is known to be not the other two—*pradhāna* and the *jīva.* (9) 'bheda-vyapadeśāt' (1.3.5)=From the mention of difference, Brahman, the locus of the celestial and the terrestrial planes of existence, is distinct from the *jīva.* (10) 'itara-parāmarśāt sa iti cen nāsambhavāt' (1.3.17)=From the mention of the other or the *jīva,* if it is said that the *daharākāśa* or Brahman in the form of the space at the heart is that the *jīva*, the answer will be: no, as it is not possible. (11) 'adhikan tu bheda-nirdeśāt' (2.1.22)=From the mention of difference, it is known that Brahman is greater than the *jīva.* (12) 'tan niṣṭhasya mokṣopadeśāt' (1.1.7)=As 'the jiva is said to attain liberation by meditating upon the Ātman, the word 'ātman' cannat be applied to *pradhāna*. (13) 'tan niṣṭhasya ca tad-yogaṁ śāsti' (1.1.19)=Further, the *Śruti* says that one who meditates upon it (Brahman), attains it. Hence, the Blissful is not the *jīva*. (14) 'muktopasṛpya-vyapabeśāt' (1.3.2)=As Brahman has been described as the object to be attained, the locus of the celestial and the terrestrial planes of existence is Brahman, and not the *jīva*. (15) 'ata eva copamā sūryakādivat' (3.2.11)=Just as the sun reflected in many locil of water is not influenced by the defects, actions or size of those locil, so Brahman, the One, existing in many places or coming in contact with many conditions is not influenced by the defects of those places or conditions (while the *jīva* is). (16) 'vṛddhi-hrāsa-bhāktvam antarbhāvāt'—(3.2.20)=Just as the sun is not influeneed by the increase, decrease etc. of the water in which it is reflected, so Brahman is not at all influenced by the qualities and actions of the conditions (while the *jīva* is).

There are, again, *sūtras* which say that the difference between Brahman and the *jīva* is not an eternal fact, for the *jīva* in its real nature is one with Brahman : (1) 'svāpyayāt' (1.1.9)=The world-cause cannot be some non-conscious entity like *pradhāna*, for in dreamless sleep, the *jiva* is said to merge into Brahman and attain the real nature of itself. And that which is the real nature or essence of the *jīva* cannot be non-conscious. (2) 'uttarāc ced āvirbhūta-svarūpas tu' (1.3.19)=It is declared in the *Ch. up.* that in liberation the *jīva* becomes bodiless and attains its real nature which is deathless, fearless and identical with Brahman. (3) In the view of Auḍulomi, Brahman has attained the state of the *jīva* because of the conditions of body, sense-organs etc. In liberation the *jīva* appears in the nature of Brahman. (4) Kāśakṛtsna holds that it is Brahman as it is that exisits as the *jīva*. Bādarāyaṇa also holds the same view. (5) 'paraṁ jaiminir mukhyatvāt' (4.3.11)=In the view of Jaimini, in liberation the *jīva* merges into Para Brahman. (6) The *sūtras* 'sampadyāvirbhavaḥ svena śabdāt' (4.4.1) and 'svāpyaya-sampattyor anyatarāpekṣam āviṣkṛtaṁ hi' (4.4.16) say that in liberation the *jīva* attains the nature of Brahman. (7) (a) 'anujñā-parihāru deha-sambandhāt...' (2.3.48)=The self comes under the sphere of injunction and prohibition of the Vedic and non-Vedie actions, because of its conjunction with the body or ignorance. (b) 'deha-yogād vā so' pi' (3.2.6)=The *jīvs* real nature as Brahman subsides because of its contact with the body or ignorance. These two *sūtras* indicate that the *jīva* in its real nature is Brahman ; it has forgotten this nature because of its contact with the body or ignorance. (8) '...tato hy-asya bandhaviparyāyau' (3.2.5)=The *jīva* becomes bound when its nature as Brahman is forgotten, and becomes liberated when it is revealed. (9) 'muktah parijñānāt' (4.4.2) =The jīva becomes liberated when it realises its real nature as Brahman.

Here, the question that naturally arises is : if the *jīva* be identical with Brahman, why has the former entangled itself to the evils of life and why is it not able to free itself by its sweet will from these evils ? In reply, Bādarāyaṇa says that (2.1.22) the *Śruti* has described the self not only as identical with Brahman but also as different from it, for Brahman is greater than the *jīva*. This amounts to saying that Brahman and the *jīva* are both different and non-different. In this connection, the following *sūtras* may be referred to ; (1) 'prakāśrayavad vā tejas-tvāt' (3.2.21)=Just as the sun and its rays are not quite distinct from each other—both being of the nature of illumination—so Brahman and the *jīva* are also not quite distinct from each other i. e. they are both different and non-different from each other. (2) 'aśmādivac ca—' (2.1.23)= The precious stones and the ordinary stones are different from each other in names and forms, but yet they are non-different from the each. In the same was, Brahman and the *jīva* are both different and non-different from each other, (iii) The *sūtra* 'ābhāsa eva ca' (2.3.50) also may be taken into consideration in this context. This *sūtra* says that the *jīva* is simply the lustre or resemblance of Brahman.

(b) As regards the nature of the state of the liberation of the self, Bādarāyaṇa says: (1) 'sampadyāvirbhavaḥ svena śabdāt' (4.4.1)=The *jīva* realises its real nature in liberation, as it is known from the *Śruti.* This *sūtra* refers to the following passage of the *Ch. up.*: 'paraṁ jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇa abhiniṣpadyate' (4.4.3) meaning 'by attaining the 'para jyotis', the self remains in its own nature', where 'para jyotis' means the self—'ātmā prakaraṇāt' (4.4.3). This means that liberation is not something new; it is always there in the self. In the empirical state the *jīva* being enveloped by ignorance, does not realise it; but when the real knowledge arises, the *jīva* realises this fact. (2) 'muktaḥ pratijñānāt' (4.4.2)=In this state, the *jīva* realises itself to be free from all bounds. (3) 'avibhāgena dṛṣṭatvāt' (4.4.4)=It is known from the *Śruti* that in liberation, the self becomes indivisible from Brahman. Here. Śaṅkara thinks that the self is totally identified with Brahman, just as pure water with pure water or the river-water with the sea-water. He quotes *upaniṣadic* passages like 'tat-tvam-asi', 'ahaṁ brahma' etc. in support of his position. Other commentators, specially the Vaiṣṇavas hold that the jīva becomes similar to or inseparable from Brahman. (4) 'brahmeṇa jaiminir upanyāsādibhyaḥ' (4.4.5)=In the view of Jaimini, the liberated self shines in the nature of Brahman. (5) 'citi tan-mātreṇa tad-ātmakatvād-ity-audulanmiḥ' (4.4.6) =Audulaumi says that the self exists as pure consciousness, because the self is of this nature. (6) 'saṁkalpād eva tacchruteḥ' (4.4.8)=The liberated self can get anything according to its sweet will, as it is declared in the *Śruti.* (7) 'āta eva canayādhipatiḥ' (4.4.9)=Hence, the self has no other lord except itself. (8) 'jagad.vyāpāra-varjam...' (4.4.17)=The liberated self acquires all the powers except that required for cosmic activites. This *sūtra* shows that though the self is identified with Brahman, it does not own the cosmic powers which exist only in Brahman. This goes in favour of the theory that the *jīva* and Brahman are both different and non-different from each other.

On the problem whether the liberated self is endowed with some bodily form or not, Bādarāyaṇa says: (1) 'abhāvaṁ bādarir āha hy-evam' (4.4.10)=In the view of Bādari, the liberated self has no body, sense-organ etc., as it is known from the *Śruti.* (2) 'bhāvaṁ jaiminir vikalpāmananāt' (4.4.11)= For Jaimini, the liberated self is endowed with the mind, sense-organs and body, as it is found in the *Śruti.* (3) 'dvādaśāhavad-ubhayavidhaṁ bādarayaṇo' taḥ' (4.4.12)=According to Bādarayaṇa, both these views are correct, just as the twelve-day sacrifice is described in some *Śruti* as *satra,* and in some other *Śruti* as *ahina.* (4) 'tanv-abhāve sandhyāvad upapadyate' (4.4.13)=In the case of liberation without body, the experiences of the self may be compared to those in *sandhyā* or dream. (5) 'bhāve jāgrad-vat' (4.4.14)=In the case of liberation with some form, the experiences of the self may be compared to those in waking state. In this context, the view of Bādarāyaṇa is most reasonable, for the liberated self being free from all limitations, can own a form or not according as it likes. Here an observation made by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa is worth of notice. He says that the liberated selves, having destroyd their ignorance by Brahma-knowledge, can have anything according to their desire Of them, those who have desire of form etc. get them by their very desire—muktāh khalu brahma-vidyayā saṁchinna-pidhānāḥ satya-saṁkalpāś ca bhavanti, teṣu ye vigrahādi-lipsavaḥ te saṁkalpād eva tad-vantaḥ syuḥ'—*Sūkṣmā* on *Brahma-sūtra* (4.4.12).

(c) Śrī Caitanya strongly opposes the Śaṅkarite theory of the identity between Brahman and the *jīva*. He says that Bhagavat is the Lord of māyā, 'while the *jīva* is subjugated by mayā, that Bhagavat is the *śaktimat* or powerful. while the *jīva* is the *śakti* or power, that Bhagavat is the vyāpaka or the pervader or whole, while the jiva is the vyāpya or pervaded or part. Under these circumstances, the *jīva* cannot be identical with Bhagavat or Brahman. The real nature of the *jīva*, according to Śrī Caitanya, is that it is in eternal service of the Lord, and the summum bonum of one's life is to realise this nature. As regards the *parimāṇa* or measure of the *jīva*, Śrī Caitanya and his follower Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa hold that the *jīva* is not *vibhu* or all-pervasive but *aṇu-parimāṇa* or atomic ; it forms an atomic part of Bhagavat who is infinite. Accordingly, the relation between Bhagavat and the *jīva* is one of difference-cum-non-difference. In liberation also, the *jīva* dose not become identical with Bhagavat but remains both identical with and different from him.

Śrī Caitanya says that the theory of identity between the self and Brahman is a heretic idea which causes the *jīvas* roam again and again in the land of birth and death. On the other hand, he has again and again said that by the pursuance of the path of knowledge, one attains *sāyujya* or oneness with Brahman, the indeterminate Absolute. He has supported this position by quoting passages from the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* also. The point is that, by pursuing the path of knowledge, the *jīva* completely dissolves into the qualityless and formless Brahman, but the moto of the path of devotion is not dissolution into Brahman or the Lord but active enjoyment of his divine sport. Śrī Caitanya propagating the path of devotion has therefore condemned the idea of identity between the self and the Lord, though he has accepted that for the pursuer of the path of knowledge, identity between the self and the indeterminate Brahman is a fact.

In reality, however, in the path of devotion also, and in the school of Śrī Caitany, in particular, the idea of oneness between the *jīva* and the Lord is found to exist implicitly. (a) It is said that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, being the powerful and power, respectively, form one reality. The *gopīs* or cowherd-ladies are, again, said to be within the being of Rādhā, for the gopīs are described by Śrī Caitanja as *kāya-vyūhas* or different forms of Rādhā and as leaves, flowers and creepers of the wishfulfilling creeper in the form of Rādhā. Now, according to the Vaiṣṇavite view as explained in the *Brahma Saṁhitā* and the *Gopāla*-tāpaī *Upaniṣad*, the *gopīs* are nothing but the selves, and, accordinly, the conception of *kāyavyūha* will mean that the selves are one with Rādhā, or rather, with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, (b) In the well-known conversation between Śrī Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya, it was stated by Rāmānanda Rāya that at the culmination of *preman* i.e. in the state of *mahābhāva*, Śrī Rādhā does not look upon herself as female nor Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a male. It is a transcendental union where all the ideas of sex as also of the enjoyer and the enjoyed subside. This is certainly a state of identity between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā. And the *gopīs*, also, being mere different forms or parts of Śrī Rādhā' realise identity with Śrī Kṛṣṇa through Śrī Rādhā. (c) While deleneating Śrī Kṛṣṇ's Rāsa-sport with the *gapīs*, the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* itself says that it was a sport of the Lord within His own being, that the sportive behaviour of the Lord was contained within Himself and that the Lord was satisfied with Himself. This means that the land of Vṛndāvana with all its surroundings and the participants in the Rāsa-sport i.e. Śrī Rādhā and all other *gopīs* were but different forms of the Lord's *svarūpaśati* or essential power, or rather, of the Lord Himself, and that through all the apparent differences, the non-duality of the Lord did not suffer at all. Śrīdhara, who is declared by Śrī Caitanya as the most faithful commentator of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, has also maintained the same view in his commentary on the Rāsa-sport. It is therefore declared that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is of the nature of non-dual knowledge.* (d) The idea of identity between Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is contained in the very concept of Śrī Gaurāṅga (Śrī Caitanya) who is declared as a combination of Rasarāja or Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Mahābhāva or Śrī Rādhā. The identity spoken of here is, however, not total identity between the self and the indeterminate Brahman, as held by Śaṅkara, but inseparability between them. In his commentary on the *sūtra* 'avibhāgena dṛṣṭatvāt' (*Brahma-sūtra,* 4.4.4), Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa says that, between the liberated self and Brahman or Bhagavat, there is neither duality nor total identity. In his view, just as two amounts of water mixed with each other become one but not totally identical, there being internal difference between them, so the liberated self and Brahman becomr one but not totally identical. In other words, here *sāyujya* or union means inseparable relation and not identity. In this connection, we may refer to an observation made by us elsewhere (*Reflexions on Indian Philosophy,* pp. 284-5) that, after liberation, the self is at liberty to merge into Brahman or to maintain some sort of difference for the enjoyment of divine sport, according to its sweet will, Baladeva also has put forward the some argument in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* (4.4.12). He says that, those who realise Brahman become completely free from ignorance, and, as such, they can enjoy Brahman by maintaining difference in forms, according to their sweet will (muktāḥ khalu Brahma-vidyayā saṁchinna-pidhānāḥ satya-saṁkalpāś ca bhavanti, teṣu ye vigraha-lipsavaḥ te saṁkalpād eva tad-uantaḥ syuḥ—*Sūkṣmā* on *BS,* 4.4.12.)* Śrī Caitanya's theory of the relation between the self and Brahman is therefore, neither difference nor non-difference, but both difference and non-difference in an unthinkable way. Between difference and non-difference. however, greater emphasis is laid on non-difference, as is clear from the above discussion.

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* It is notable that Śaṅkara also holds the same view on this issue : yadā sasarīratāṁ saṁkalpayati tadā sasairo bhavati, yadā tv-asarīratāṁ tadā asarīra iti, satyasaṁkalpatvāt (BSSB, 4.4.12)— When it desires to have a bady, it is endowed with a body ; when it desires to be free from the body, it is devoid of the body.

It may, thus, be said that the non-duality criticised and rejected by Śrī Caitanya is that which means a total and eternal absorption of the self into the indeterminate Brahman, and not that which a devotee mains through an emotional relation with the Lord and which contains and amount of duality, as it were. If it is asked whether this position of Śrī Caitanya can be regarded as 'advaita' or non-dualism', our reply will be that it is certainly non-dualism' in the sense that 'reality is not two'. In reality however, this state of transcendental realisation of a devotee can be best described in the language of Sri Ramakrishna as 'neither one nor two but in between one and two'.

3 (a) According to the Advaita Vedāntins, *jīva* or the self is identical with Brahman, the Absolute, under all circumstances i.e. both in bondage and in liberation. This does not, however, mean that the empirical self in its very nature as endowed with the mind-body and as subjected to birth and death and also to the resulting joys and sorrows is identical with Brahman. In the view of the Advaita Vedāntins, it is the self in its essential nature as pure consciousness and bliss that is identical with Brahman which is also of the nature of pure consciousness and bliss. In this connection the Advaitins say that *Upaniṣadic* passages like 'tat-tvam-asi', 'ahaṁ brahmā 'smi' etc. bear the sense of the identity through *jahad-ajahal-lakṣaṇā* or implication which retains a part of the direct meaning and rejects another part of the same. In pursuance of this principal of implication, the meaning of the passage 'tat-tvam-asi' is explained by the Advaitins in this way : (a) The

term 'tat' denotes Brahman of the nature of infinite and imperceptible consciousness and bliss. (b) The term 'tvam' denotes the *jīva* or empirical self of the nature of finite and perceptible consciousness and bliss. (c) The term 'asi' denotes identity between 'tat' and 'tvam'. But as the denotations of the terms, Brahman and the *jīva* are partially contradictory to each other, for establishing identity between the two, we are to reject the contradictory parts of these two meanings i. e. the parts of 'infinite' and 'finite' and also the parts of 'imperceptible' and 'perceptible' and to retain only the common parts of both i.e. the parts of 'consiousness' and 'bliss'. In other words, it is the self in its essential nature as consciousness and bliss that is identical with Brahman of the nature of consciousness and bliss. The empirical self as such is, thus, not identical with Brahman, because. during this state, the self being enveloped by ignorance does not understands its essential nature. When the self, by its spiritual culture washes off its ignorance and realises its real nature, it realises its identity with Brahman also. If we go deeper into the Advaitic concept of identity between the self and Brahman, we shall find that though the self is said to be identical with Brahman, the former does not share all the qualities or powers of the latter. That is why it is held that though the self in its essential nature is identical with Brahman, the former does not own the cosmic activities of the latter ('jagad-vyāpāra-varjam'—*BS*, 4.4.17).

From the above discussion, it will be clear that no Advaitin, ever regards the living entity as identical with Brahman ; nor does he ever think himself as God or Nārāyaṇa or as equal or similar to Him. Hence, to criticise the Advaitins to be thinking themselves as God or Nārāyaṇa, to be identifying the living entity with the Lord, or to be thinking that Nārāyaṇa takes birth as an ordinary being and then again becomes Nārāyaṇa, and so on is quite unreasonable.

(b) It is argued by the Vaiṣṇava thinkers that as the self is an atomic part of Brahman, the Infinite, there cannot be any identity between the two, for the simple reason that a part cannot be identical with the whole. Accordingly, the identity spoken of in the *Upaniṣads* means, they say, that the self and Brahman are qualitatively one—both of them having *cit* or consciousness as the common quality—while quantitatively they are different.

Against this view, we have to say that, according to the Advaita Vedāntins, the self is not a part of Brahman but a misrepresentation thereof. Granting the atomicity of the self, we may argue that the part may not be identical with the whole when the former maintains its distinct existence, but when the part merges into the whole, there may be complete identity between the two. The *Upaniṣads* and other scriptures again and again give the example of the merger of river-water into the sea-water. In this example, the river water is a limited and distinct amount of water, but when it merges into the sea-water, we cannot make any distinction between the two amounts of water, since we cannot say that this part of the sea is the water of this river and that part is the water of that river. In other words, when the river-water merges into the sea-water, these two amounts of water become completely identitacal both qualitively and quantitatively. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.9) gives the example of flower-juice and honey and says that after the formation of honey from flower-juice, we cannot make any distinction between the juice of different flowers. In the same way, when the self merges into the Absolute, these two entities become completely identical both qualitatively and quantitatively.

It is again argued by the Vaiṣṇava thinkers that if the self merges into the Absolute and loses its individual existence, then the self bereft of any experience of knowledge and bliss for itself will be totally extinct, which on the part of the self will tantamount to spiritual suicide.

Against this, we have to say that the self's identity with Brahman means not the extinction of the former, but the expansion thereof. In other words, when the self realises its identity with Brahman, the limited 'I' becomes unlimited 'I' and the self's finite knowledge and bliss become infinitised. Hence, it is completely wrong to regard this state of identity as a state of extinction or spiritual suicide.

4. (a) According to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the individual self is not an independent reality ; it is dependent upon the Universal self or Parabrahman. The self and Parabrahman are said to be different from each other, though the difference between the two has not come into prominence. During the embodied state i.e. when the self is endowed with the conditions of the mind-body, Paramātman pervades the self as its *antarātman* or inner self. At this state, it is difficult to distinguish the individual self from the inner soul, for both these realities then remain inseparable from each other.[1] On the other hand, this embodied self cannot be fully identical with the Parabrahman, since the embodied self is incomplete and impure, while Parabrahman is complete and completely pure. During this state, Parabrahman remains simply as the *sākṣin* or impartial onlooker. In reality, according to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, Parabrahman, the transcendental reality, has got no relation with the individual self ; Parabrahman comes in relation with the self only through the *vyūha* or a partial manifestation of Vāsudeva[2].

As regards the nature of the self and its relation with Parabrahman during liberation, we find different views in the *Nārāyaṇīya* as follows : (1) The liberated self, being free from merits and demerits, attains *nirvāṇa,* i.e. merges into Brahman.[3] (2) The liberated self merges into the *vyūha* called Vāsudeva, otherwise called Paramātman or Kṣetrajña, who on the one hand, is the resort of all the excellent qualities and, on the other, is qualityless i. e. devoid of worldly qualities.[4] (3) The enlightened sages take resort to the rays of Sūrya or the sun, the resort of all just as birds take rest on the branches of trees.[5] (4) The liberated self, being freed from good and bad *karmans* or acts, becomes qualityless and merges into the qualityless Puruṣa.[6] (5) The liberated self, enters the *vyūhas* of Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṅkarṣaṇa, successively, and at the end enters the *vyūha* of Vāsudeva or Kṣetrajña, the qualityless. (6) The liberated self becomes one with the Paramātman.[7]

From these views, it is clear that, according to the *Nārāyaṇīya,* the linerated self, having a subtle divine form in consonance with its psychological make-up, may exist in the *vyūhas* or it may merge completely into the being of Parabrahman. Whether the self will merge into the Absolute or will remain distinct from it will depend upon the will or psychological set-up of the *sādhaka* or spiritual aspirant. Of course, the merger of the self into the Parabrahman having been presented as an alternative view, we may assume that according to the Nārāyaṇīya, the primary aim of liberation is to reside in the *vyūhas* in some divine form.

Some try to explain here that the ultimate aim of liberation, according to the *Nārāyaṇīya*, is the attainment of oneness or identity between the self and Parabrahman, as in Śaṅkara's Advaitism. But this view will go against the tradition of Pāñcarātra or Vaiṣṇava Tantra. According to this system, the Absolute is qualityless and qualified at the same time and, hence, merger into the Parabrahman may mean either to lose one's identity and merge totally into Brahman or to enter into the being of Parabrahman and enjoy its divine sport in the divine land. The acceptance of the second view will be in consonance with the relation of *bhedābheda* or difference-cum-non-difference accepted by most of the later Vaiṣṇavas.

(b) *The Self, according to the Saṁhitās.*

In the *Saṁhitās*, the self has sometimes been declared as identical with the Absolute and sometimes as different from it. According to some *Saṁhitās*, Parabrahman manifests itself as innumerable selves and exists in different bodies ; in reality, there is no individual self as distinct from the Universal self.[8] *The Nārada-Pañcarātra* says that, just as the reflection of the sun in a mirror or in water, the *jīva* is a reflection of Parabrahman.[9] Further, in the view of this *Saṁhitā* and the *Viṣṇu Saṁhitā*, it is Parabrahman that appears as the individual self and it is Parabrahman that remains as the inner soul in all the *jīvas*. It is said in some *Saṁhitās* that Paramātman influenced by three kinds of mala or action appears as the bound and limited individual self. The Viṣṇu Saṁhitā says that the same Universal self manifests itself as different individual selves and inner souls in different locit or organisms. The *Padmā Saṁhitā* also says that the same Universal self limited by different organisms manifests itself as different individual selves. The same view is found in the *Parāma Saṁhitā and the Jayākhya Saṁhitā* also.[10] In some *Saṁhitās*, of course, a difference between Parabrahman and the individual self has been accepted. In the *Viṣṇutilaka*, it is said that there are three catagories, namely, Brahman of the nature of illumination, the *jīva* of the nature of knowledge and the world devoid of consciousness.

During the embodied or bound state, Parabrahman pervades the individual selves and exists in them as their inner self. The *Parama Saṁhitā* and the *Jayākhya Saṁhitā* say that though Parabrahman is one, it manifests itself as different individual selves in different organisms. In this state, the individual self is different from Parabrahman in form, power and knowledge.[11] Parabrahman is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, but when it manifests itself as the individual selves, it is endowed with atomic measure, limited knowledge and limited power. Parabrahman attains this state of individual self under the influence of the three kinds of *mala* or action capable of binding the self.[12] And when the self is thus bound by actions, it identifies itself with some aspect or quality of the material object, and, as a result, it is subjected to the cycle of birth and death and to the resulting sorrows and sufferings.

The *Saṁhitās* describe the nature of the liberated self as follows : 'The self attains *samāpatti* or oneness with Brahman', 'the self is unified with Brahman', 'the self becomes Brahman' 'the self merges into Brahman', 'the self enters into Brahman', 'the self attain *sāyujya* or inseparable existence with Brahman', and so on.[13] It is also said that liberation means acquisition of the proper knowledge of Brahman, which means realisation of identity between the self and Brahman. The *Parama Saṁhitā* and the *Padma Tantra* say that in liberation the self is totally identified with Brahman i. e. there remains no difference between the two, and the individual self, being identical with the Universal self, exists everywhere.[14]

Some *Saṁhitās*, on the other hand, hold that in liberation also there remains a difference between the individual self and the Universal self. In most of the *Saṁhitās*, it is said that the liberated self is atomic in measure, that it exists eternally in the eternal divine land and that it enjoys the bliss of divine sport for ever in association with Paramātman. The *Padma Saṁhitā* speaks of three types of liberation. In one type of liberation, the individual self and Brahman remain different from each other ; in another type of liberation, these two realities become identical ; and in the third type of liberation, these two realities remain in a relation of *bhedābheda* or difference-cum-non-difference. Of these three types of liberation, that in the from of attainment of identity between the self and Brahman is said to be the best form of liberation.[15] There is no doubt, however, that liberation in the form of difference-cum-non-difference is also accepted in this philosophy. The Jayākhya Saṁhitā says that just as wood merges into the burning fire, and just as a river-water merges into the sea-water, so a *yogin* or one hankering after union with Brahman merges into it. That means, according to this *Saṁhitā*, attainment of identity between the self and Brahman is what is called liberation. It is however, held that though the self merges into Brahman, there remains some sort of difference between the two. This position is supported by the example that, though the river-water merges into the sea-water, there remains a subtle difference between the river-water and the sea-water.[16] That means, according to the *Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, liberation means the attainment of unity or equality between the individual self and Brahman, and not complete identity between them.

From the foregoing descussion, it is seen that, in the state of liberation, Pāñcarātra accepts both difference and non-difference between the individual self and Brahman. Some thinkers on the basis of the passages speaking of dualism, explain

Pāñcarātra as a dualistic philosophy, while others, on the basis of the passages advocating non-dualism, interpret this system as a non-dualistic one. In reality, the Pāñcarātra philosophy is neither dualism nor non-dualism, since we find here that, along with the conceptions of difference and non-difference, there is another conception, namely, the conception of difference-cum-non-difference, by which we can synthesise the opposite views of difference and non-difference. On the one hand, all the rituals or religious observances found in the Pāñcarātra system clearly show that it is a path of devotion, where the ideal set forth for the aspirant or the self is to serve Brahman, the Lord—an attitute which is quite opposed to the concept of non-dualism of the path of knowledge. On the other hand, nowhere in the Pāñcarātra works, the individual self has been described as totally different from Brahman. Hence, the most plausible interpretation of the Pāñcarātra view of the relation between individual self and the Universal self will be that, it is one of *bhedābheda* or difference-cum-non-difference. In liberation, the self exists in a divine form in a divine land and enjoys eternal bliss in association with Brahman, with which the self maintains a relation of difference-com-non-difference. Of course, in Pāñcarātra, more emphasis is laid on non-difference, but this non-difference is not to be identified with Śaṅkara's non-dualism where the individual self loses its individuality and totally merges into Brahman.

The fact is that, with the maturity of devotion, the self realises its non-difference from Brahman, but yet it maintains some sort of difference for the enjoyment of the divine sport of the Lord. This means that non-difference is the ultimate truth, and difference is conditional. Hence, if a devotee desires at the end to merge into the being of Brahman, there is nothing to stand against his will. That is why it is said in the *Ahirbudhnya*

Saṁhitā that a spiritual aspirant attains Brahman just in consonance with the desires he maintains in his embodied state. But since the Pāñcarātra school follows the path of devotion, the form of liberation set forth as the ideal of the spiritual aspirant is one in which the self maintains a relation of difference-cum-non-difference with Brahman and enjoys divine sport with the Lord in eternal association with Him.

REFERENCES

1. See *Nār*, 3354.30 ; 347.39 ; 339.47-8.

2. See *Nār*, 338.4 ; 339.22 ; 351.4.

3. mokṣas coktas tvayā brahman nirvāṇaṁ paramaṁ sukham, ye tu muktā bhavantiha puṇya-pāpa-vivarjitāḥ—*Nār*, 340.8,

4. caturthyāṁ caiva te gatyāṁ gacchanti puruṣottamam. ekāntinas tu puruṣā gacchanti paramaṁ padam.—*Nār*, 348.3.

5. yasya rasmi-sahasreṣu sākhasv-iva vihamgamāḥ. vasanty-āsritya munayaḥ saṁsiddhā daivataiḥ saha—*Nār*, 362.3,

6. puruṣas caiko nirguṇo visvarupastaṁ nirguṇaṁ puruṣaṁ cāvisanti. hitvā guṇa-mayaṁ sarvaṁ karma hitvā subhāsubham—*Nār*, 351.10 ; nirguṇaṁ nirguṇībhūtvā pravisanti sanātanam —*Nār*, 350.27.

7. puṇya-pāpa-vivarjitāḥ—vāsudevaṁ pravisanti—*Nār*, 344. 15-19 ; evaṁ hi paramātmānaṁ kecid icchanti paṇḍitāḥ—*Nār*. 351.13.

8. ekô 'py-ātmā vahuṣv-evam ity-āhus tattva-darsinaḥ. sa hi ātmānvarātmā ca paramātmā ca sa smṛtaḥ—Viṣṇu Saṁhitā,

9. jīvas tat-pratihimbas ca bhoktā ca sukha-duḥkhayoḥ, pratīyate punas tatra pratibimbo yathā rabeḥ—*NPR*, 2.1.31.

10. Padma Saṁhitā, 1, 4, 84-15 ; tathā guṇa-mayair bhāvair eko hi puruṣaḥ paraḥ, bhinna-rūpo jagaty-asmin baddho muktas ca jāyate—JS, 2.90.

11. ayaḥ-piṇḍe yathā vahnir bhinnas tisthaty-abhinnavat—JS, 4.84.

12. ākārasya tirodhānād aṇutvaṁ puṁsa iṣyatc—*ABS*, 14.18 ; see also *LT*, 13.32

13. 'brahmabhāvāpatti' 'vaiṣṇavaṁ tat visct padam'ABS. 14.3.41 ; 'brahma-samāpatti', 'brahma saṁyujyatc param'—JS, 4. 50-52.

14. aikyaṁ prāpnoti sā muktir uktā sāyujya-lakṣaṇā—Padma Saṁhitā ; aham-eva bhavanty-ete na bhedas tatra kascana—Parama Saṁhita, 1.69.

15. muktasya na bhedo ,sti bheda-hetor abhāvataḥ—Padma Sàṁhita 12.65 ; bhedena cāpy-abhedena misrena ca caturmukha—abhede muktir atyantam aikyaṁ syāt para-jīvayoh, atmano bnāvanā caikyaṁ so ‘ham ityaivātmikā—Padam Saṁhitā.

16. sarit-samghād yathā toyam sampraviṣṭam mahodadhu, alakṣyas codake bhedaḥ parasmin yoginām tathā—JS, 4.121.

ON THE ADVAITA VEDANTIC VIEW OF DEVOTION

SECTION

5

ON THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC VIEW OF DEVOTION

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Presentation and criticism*

1. "Although they (the Māyāvādī philosophers) sometimes take to so-called devotional service, their idea is that as long as they are not liberated they will continue their devotional service, but at the end, when they become liberated, they will "become one with God". Such temporary time-serving devotional service is not accepted as pure devotional service. Actual devotional service continues even after liberation." —*BG*, 9.2.

2. Factually, the devotional service of the Lord is described in *Vedānta-sūtra*, but the Māyāvādī philosophers, the Śaṅkarites, prepared a commentary known as Śārīraka bhāṣya in which the transcendental form of the Lord is denied." —*CC*, 2.6.169.

3. "The Māyāvādī considers all the paraphernalia of devotional service to be māyā." Māyā refers to material existence, which is characterized by the reactions of fruitive activities. Māyāvādīs consider devotional service to be among such fruitive activities." *CC*, 1.7.33.

4. "Foolish Māyāvādīs, not knowing that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is based on a solid philosophy of transcendental science, superficially conclude that those who dance and chant do not have philosophical knowledge."—*CC*, 1.7.42.

5. "For all the *ācāryas*, even the impersonalist Śaṅkarācārya, have recommended the worship of the transcendental form of the Lord. Impersonalists like Śaṅkarācārya recommend the worship of five forms, known as *pañcopāsanā*, which include Lord Viṣṇu Vaiṣṇavas, however, worship the forms of Lord Viṣṇu in His varied manifestations, such as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Sītā-Rāma and Rukmiṇī-Kṛṣṇa. Māyāvādīs admit that worship of the Lord's form is required in the beginning, but they think that in the end everything is impersonal."—*CC*, 1.5.226.

6. "Māyāvādī *sannyāsis* do not worship the deity, or if they do so. They generally worship the deity of Lord Śiva or the *pañcopāsanā* (Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva, Durgādevī, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya)."—*CC*, 1.7.151.

7. Māyāvādīs admit that worship of the Lord's form is required in the beginning, but they think that in the end everything is impersonal."—*CC*, 1.5.227.

8. "Impersonalists are against the worship of the Lord's form in the temple."—*CC*, 1.5.226.

9. "As a result, they cannot understant devotional service or the worship of the Supreme Person, *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. The Māyāvādī philosophers

consider Deity worship in devotional service to be *pratibimba-vāda* or the worship of a from that is the reflection of a false material form. Thus the Lord's transcendental form, which is eternally blissful and full of knowledge, is unknown to Māyāvādī philosophers", —*CC*, 2.6.168.

10. "Transcendental loving devotional service is the spiritual activity of the spirit soul. Māyāvādī philosophers confuse such spiritual activity with material activity." —*CC*, 1.7.118

11. "The Māyavādī philosophers offer lip service to Vedic authority but try to escape the Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. They concoct some idea of transcendental position and call themselves Nārāyaṇa or God. Māyāvādī philosophers consider themselves about the influence of *Karma-kāṇḍa* (fruitive activities and their reactions). For them the spiritual world is equated with the Buddhist voidism."—*CC*, 2.6.168.

B. *Our observations*

1-2. (a) The devotional activities of temporary nature to be Performed during the pre-liberation stage are meant for the followers of the path of knowledge, who hanker after merging into Brahman.

(b) In Śaṅkara's comt. on the *Brahma-sūtra*, the transcendental form of the Lord has been accepted for the devotees. Along with it, the paraphernalia of devotion is also accepted (See Note below.)

3. (a) So long as the Supreme Reality is not realised, all actions including devotional services must be regarded as the play of māyā or ignorance.

(b) The Advaitins never consider the devotional services to be fruitive activities. No reference can be given to support such a view.

4. (a) The Advaitins really accept that devotion is based on a solid philosophy. Śaṅkara's comt. on *Vedānta-sūtra* and his original works like 'bhaja govinda' etc.bear testimony to it.

(b) The view that those who dance and chant do not have philosophical knowledge might be one of some ordinary or ignorant people, but not of the real Advaitins.

5-6. Yes, why, then, does BV say again and again that the impersonalists disregard devotional activities ?

7. See obs. 1 under this section.

8. It is true that the Advaitins aspiring for the impersonal form of the Supreme, do not worship the personal form of the Lord in temples. This does not, however, mean that they are against the practice of worshipping the Lord in temples by the devotees.

9. (a) The Advaitins certainly understand the importance of devotional services to the Supreme Person. In their view, however, these services are meant for the devotees, and not necessarily for the followers of the path of knowledge. (See Note at the bottom).

(b) The Advaitins have never used the term 'pratibimha-vāda' with reference to the devotional activities. Nor have they ever remarked that the form worshipped by the devotees is the 'reflection of a false material form'. These views have been coined by BV himself.

(c) The Advaitins really know that the Lord's transcendental form is full of bliss and knowledge. (See Note below).

10. So long as the natures of the self and the Supreme are not realised, all the devotional activities are certainly material, though the aim or end of these activities is spiritual.

11. (a) The Advaitins also follow those ritualistic ceremonies which are relevant to their monistic philosophy, but not the fruitive sacrifices which are opposed to spiritualism. The same is the case with the devotees also.

(b) No Advaitin ever regards himself as Nārāyaṇa or God, Nārāyaṇa or Brahman being the goal to be attained. If an Advaitin address another as 'Nārāyaṇa', the term 'Nārāyaṇa' will have to be taken in a secondary sense, just as the term 'prabhu' used by some Vaiṣṇvas to address another Vaiṣṇava is taken in a secondary sense to indicate the greatness of the saint.

(c) The Advaitins do never think themselves to be above the influence of fruitive activities ; rather, it is their aim to go beyond the fruitive activities.

(d) The Buddhists are never followers of Voidism. Nirvāṇa, their aim, is not void but full, infinite and inexpressible. (See our Note on Buddhism under Section 16.)

Note :

The view that the Advaitins disregard *bhakti* or devotion is completely wrong. *Śañkara* himself has accepted *bhakti* as a path propagated in the *Vedas :* (1) "yat tāvad ucyeta yo'sau nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ......ātmanā ātmānam anekadhā vyūhya avasthitaḥ iti tan na nirākriyate......yad api tasya bhagavataḥ abhigamanādi-lakṣaṇam ārādhanam ajasram ananya-citta-tayā abhipreyate, tadapi na pratiṣidhyate, śruti-smṛtyoḥ iśvara-praṇidhānasya prasiddhatvāt"—"The assertion that Nārāyana, the Absolute, exists by dividing or expanding himself in many ways is not being refuted. Again, the innumerable ways of service like approaching the Lord etc. meant for directing the mind (towards the Lord) are also not being refuted, since *iśvara-praṇiahāna* or metidation of the Lord with devotion is found in the *Śruti* and the *Smṛti* texts.'...*BSŚB*, 2.2.42. (2) "api cainam ātmānaṁ nirasta-samasta-prapañcam avyaktaṁ saṁrādhanakāle paśyanti yoginaḥ ; saṁrādhanaṁ ca bhakti-dhyānaprani dhānādy anuṣṭhānam"......"Further, during saṁrādhana, the *yogins* perceive or see the Self or Absolute—inexpressible and lying completely beyond the empirical world. Saṁrādhanā means the pursuance of devotion, meditation and meditation through devotion."—*BSŚB*, 3.2.24.

In reality, Śaṅkara had a strong inclination towards devotion. His hymns to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Kālī and other Gods and Goddesses are replete with such deep feelings of devotion as are rare even in the writings of the well-known devotees.

But since Śaṅkara is a follower of the path of *jñāna* or knowledge, he has not dealt with the concept of *bhakti* in detail ; nor has he prescribed for his followers the paraphenalia pursued in the path of *bhakti*, just as a devotionist never advises has followers to pursue the practices prescribed for the followers of the path of knowledge. This is the trend followed by eyery religious teacher ; the Advaintins should not be criticised for this. It is to be noted that the Advaitins never say anything destructive against the path of *bhakti*, while the Vaiṣṇavas attack the path of *jñānā*, whenever any chance comes at their disposal.

ON THE PATH OF ADVAITA VEDANTA OR JNANA-MARGA (THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE)

SECTION

6

ON THE PATH OF ADVAITA VEDĀNTA OR JÑĀNA-MĀRGA (THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE)

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Criticism.*

1. "The paths of the culture of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*) and of mystic powers (*yogamārga*) are equally hazardous, for one does not know where he will go by following these uncertain methods."—*CC*, 1.1.91.

2. "Those who are fond of mental speculation (*jñāna-mārga*) or want to meditate in mystic *yoga* to find the Absolute Truth must approach the impersonal effulgence of the Lord and His partial representation, respectively. Such persons cannot realize the eternal form of the Lord."—*CC*, 1.2.26.

3. "The nondualist Māyāvādi philosopher who falsely believes that he is nondifferent from the Lord is unable to call Him like Advaita Prabhu."—*CC*, 1.3.102.

4. "Negative cognition of an object beyond the reach of sense perception is the way of indirect knowledge, which is not altogether imperfect but which produces only fragmentary knowledge in the form of impersonal spiritual relization and monism."—*CC*, 1.4.67.

5. "Accepting the impersonalist view of voidness or the nonexistence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead

negates all study of the *Vedas.* Impersonal speculation aims at disproving the conclusion of the *Vedas.* Therefore any impersonal speculative presentation should be understood to be against the principles of the *Vedas* or standard scriptures. Since the speculation of the impersonalists does not follow the principles of the *Vedas,* their conclusion must be considered to be against the *Vedic* principles. Anything not supported by the Vedic principles must be considered imaginary and lacking in standard proof. Therefore no impersonalist explanation of any *Vedic* literature can be accepted."—*CC,* 1.6.15.

6. "They are so absorbed in impersonal thought that they take it for granted that all spiriual variety is material. Because they do not know anything beyond their misconception of the *brahmajyoti.*"—*CC,* 1.7.29.

7. It has become fashionable since the time of Śaṅkarācārya to explain everything regarding the *śāstras* in an indirect way."—*CC,* 1.7.108.

8. "The purpose of the discussion in the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedāntasūtra* is to philosophically establish the personal feature of the Absolute Truth. The impersonalists, however, in order to establish their philosophy, accept these discussions in terms of *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti,* or indirect meanings. He (Śrī Caitanya) opined in this connection that anyone who follows the principles of the Śārīraka-bhāṣya is doomed."—*CC,* 1.7.111.

9. "The Māyāvāda philosophy," Lord Śiva informed his wife Pārvatī, "is impious [asacchāstra]. It is covered Buddhism. My dear Pārvatī in the form of a brāhmaṇa in Kali-yuga I teach this imagined Māyāvāda Philo-

sophy. In order to cheat the atheists, I describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead to be without form and without qualities. Similarly, in explaining Vedānta I describe the same Māyāvāda philosophy in order to mislead the entire population toward atheism by denying the personal form of the Lord."—*CC*, 1.7.110.

10. "My dear wife, hear my explanations of how I have spread ignorance through Māyāvāda philosophy. Simply by hearing it, even an advanced scholar will fall down. In this philosophy, which is certainly very inauspicious for people in general, I have misrepresented the real meaning of the *Vedas* and recommended that one give up all activities in order to achieve freedom from *karma*. In this Māyāvāda philosophy I have described the *jīvātmā* and Parmātma to be one and the same". Svarūpa-dāmodara Gosvāmī says that anyone who is eager to understand the Māyāvāda philosophy must be considered insane. This especially applies to a Vaiṣṇava who reads the Śārīraka-bhāṣya and considers himself to be one with God."—*CC*, 1.7.111.

11. "If we accept the judgment of Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*, however, the Māyāvādīs are to be considered *māyayāpahṛta-jñāna*, or bereft of all knowledge, because they do not recognize the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or they claim that His existence is a product of the material conception (māyā), These are characteristics of *asuras* or demons."—*CC*, 1.7. 117.

12. "Why the *daivī-māyā* or illusory energy of Kṛṣṇa takes away the knowledge of the Māyāvādī philosophers is also explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* by the use of the words "asuraṁ bhāvam aśritāḥ."—*CC*, 1.7.114.

13. "Śaṅkarācārya, by presenting the *Vedānat-sūtra* in his own way, has clearly done a great disservice to human society, for one who follows his Māyāvāda philosophy is doomed."—*CC*, 1.7.114.

14. "Their tiny brains and poor fund of knowledge cannot afford them sufficient enlightenment to realise that when a man's energy is transformed, the man himself is not transformed but remains the same person."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

15. "Impersonalists cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead ; therefore it is not possible for them to enter into the spiritual kingdom of God and return home, back to Godhead ."—*CC*, 2.8.90.

16. "This is typical of all Māyāvādis or atheists who interpret the meaning of Vedic literature in their own imaginative way. The real purpose of such foolish people is impose the impersonalist conclusion on all Vedic literature. The Māyāvādi atheists also interpret *Bhagavad-gītā*. In every verse of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly stated that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But Māhāvādī atheists still try to prove that the Absolute Truth is impersonal." —*CC*, 2.6.132.

17. "The first-class materialists (the Māyāvādīs) imagine five specific forms of the lord. Bereft of real knowledge due to agnosticism, the Māhāvādī philosophers should not even be seen by the devotess of the Lord, nor touched, because those philosophers are liable to be punished by Yamarāja, the superintendent demigod

who judges the activities of sinful men. The Māyāvādī agnostics wander within this universes in different species of life due to their nondevotional activities." —*CC*, 2.6.167.

18. "Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, says : 'māyayāpabṛta-jñānāḥ'. Because of the Māyāvādī philosophers' temperament, real knowledge is taken from them Because they cannot receive the mercy of the Lord, they will always be bewildered by His transcendental form."—*CC*, 2.6.168.

19. "...the Māyāvādīs cannot understand how the spiritual potencies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead act. Because of their poor fund of knowledge they cannot understand the distinction in the spiritual world between knowledge, the knower and the object of knowledge. Because of this Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu considers the Māyāvādī philosophers more dangerous than the Buddhists."—*CC*, 2.6.168.

20. "The intelligence of the Māyāvādīs is not purified, therefore even though they practice austerities for self-realization they cannot remain within the impersonal *brahmajyoti*. Consequently, they fall down again into this material world. The Māyāvādīs' conception of spiritual existence is almost identical to the negation of material existence. The Māyāvadīs believe that there in nothing positive in spiritual life."—*CC*, 2.6.168.

21. "Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore warns us to avoid these commentaries. If one indulges in hearing the Śaṅkarite Śārīraka bhāṣya, he will certainly be bereft of all real knowledge."—*CC*, 2.6.169.

22. When the atheistic philosophers or the Māyāvādis, being unable to understand the inconceivable energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, imagine an impersonal void, their imagination is only the counterpart of materialistic thinking."—*CC*, 2.6.171.

23. "The Māhāvādī philosophers, however, consider...the ultimate goal of life to be liberation, or merging into the existence of the Supreme. All of this, however, is simply due to the imagination of the conditioned soul. It simply opposes him to material activities. One should always remember that all Vedic literatures are self-evident. No one is allowed to interpret the Vedic verses. If one does so, he indulges in imaigination, and that has no value."—*CC*, 2.6.179.

24. "...both *karmis* and *jñānis* are unfit for receiving the mercy of the Lord and becoming devotees. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura therefore says, 'jñāna-kāṇḍa karma-kāṇḍa, kevala viṣera bhāṇḍa' : those who have taken to the process of *karma-kāṇḍa* (fruitive activity) and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* (speculation on the science of transcendence) have simply eaten from poisoned pots. They are condemned to remain in material existence life after life until they take shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."—*CC*, 2.6.235.

25. "According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Māyāvādī *sannyāsis* who falsely think of themselves as liberated from the clutches of māyā are called *vimukta-māninaḥ*. Actually, they are not liberated, but they think that they have become liberated and have become Nārāyaṇa Himself."—*CC*, 2.6.235.

26. "Those who aspire after liberation attempt to merge into the impersonal Brahman. Indeed, such people can never dream of returning home, back to Godhead." —*CC*, 2.8.90.

27. "Śrīpād Śaṅkarācārya wanted to establish the predominance of one's spiritual identity ; therefore he wanted to convert the atheists through an imaginary interpretation of Vedic literatures."—*CC*, 2.25.42.

28. "The word *pāṣaṇḍī* refers to those who are opposed to pure devotional service. In particular, these are the Māyāvādīs, the impersonalists."—*CC*, 2.9.11.

29. "Dry speculations and impersonal interpretations by artificial means are all useless for the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs*"—*BG*, 5.6.

30. "Those who are engaged in fruitive pious activities and who are ultimately hoping to be liberated from this material entanglement will never be successful either, because they deride the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. In other words, persons who mock Kṛṣṇa are to be understood to be demoniac or atheistic."—*BG*, 9.12.

31. "One who cannot elevate himself beyond the impersonal conception of Brahman runs the risk of falling down."—*BG*, 14.27.

32. "In this way, many jñānīs who want to know the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Brahman, get somehow misled by the illusory potency, māyā. Māyā prepares her last

fatal trap, liberation, by which she keeps the monists steanded in the ocean of material existence."—*SOK*, P. 73.

33. "The dry speculative philosophers may kindly note one point by using the word *teṣām,* Lord Kṛṣṇa openly declares that He is always merciful to His surrendered devotees. The reason that the Lord expands Himself as the Supersoul and enters everyone's heart is not to bless the empiric philosophers and *yogīs* but to bless the devotees from within."—*SOK*, P. 120.

34. "But great suffering befalls these dry speculators attached to the theory of the unmanifest Absolute."—*SOK*, P. 121.

35. "The Māyāvādīs are always eager to deny the Supreme Energetic—His potencies. They are no better than demons like Rāvaṇa, who tried to usurp the Lord's potency, and Kaṁsa, who tried to kill Him outright. This sort of behavior is expected of demons. Aspiring for evil powers, they abandon devotional service to the Lord and take to sinful activities. In this way they forfeit all knowledge. Lord Kṛṣṇa aptly describes them in the Gita (7.15) "*māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ*" : "those whose knowledge is stolen by illusion."—*SOK*, P. 151.

36. "The Māyāvādī's unnatural desire to deny the inherent characteristics of his conscious self is the very same desire that keeps him from attaining liberation. Hence the Māyāvādīs' false and arrogant claim of liberation is merely a demonstration of their perverted intelligence."—*SOK*, P. 147.

B. *Our observations.*

1. Since the paths of knowledge and *yoga* have been declared in the scriptures as means for the realisation of the Absolute, they can be regarded neither as hazardous nor as uncertain methods. To quote a few passages : "Brahmaiva san brahmāpy-eti"—"Being Brahman, one attains Brahman", "yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāny ātmaivābhūd vijānataḥ"—"When all the entities become identical with the self" (*Īśa Up.*, 7), "taṁ yogam itii manynate sthirām indriya-dhāraṇām" —"Yoga means keeping the senses quiet" (*Kāṭha Up.*, 2.6.18), "tat kāraṇaṁ sāṁkhya-yogābhipannam"—"That Cause is to be known by Sāṁkhya (knowledge) and Yoga" and soon. From these and other innumerable passages, it can be confirmed that the paths of *jñāna* and yoga have been approved by the *Vedas* and other scriptures to be leading to the real knowledge of the Absolute.

2. Since the followers of the paths of *jñāna* and yoga aspire to realise the Absolute in its impersonal form, they do not necessarily realise the personal form of the Lord, just as a devotee aspiring to realise the Absolute in its personal form does not necessarily realise its impersonal form. This difference in realisation is however, negligible, since the personal form and impersonal form are but two manifestations of the same Absolute.

3. The Advaitins never say that the living entity or empirical *jīva* is identical with the Lord. (See Note, Section-1).

4. Realisation of the Impersonal Absolute through the path of knowledge, being a direct or positive cognition,

is certainly a perfect knowledge. There is no proof in the *Upaniṣads* and other scriptures that this knowledge is a negative or imperfect one. The cognition of super-sensuous objects is of course, attained not by the external senses but by the 'spiritual organs', But for that this knowledge cannot be regarded as a negative one.

5. The impersonalitists never speak of voidness or non-existence of the Supreme Person. They accept both the Impersonal Absolute and the Personal Absolute on the authority of the *Vedas*. Accordingly, their view never goes against the Vedic principles.

6. The Advaitins never hold that spiritual varity is material ; it is an imaginary interpretation by BV. In reality, the Advaitins accept spiritual variety for the devotees or for those who want to retain their individuality. Śaṅkara says that if an aspirant desires to retain his form in liberation, he may do so ("yadā saśariratāṁ saṁkalpayati tadā saśarīro bhavati"—*BSŚB*, 4.4.12) (See Note under Section 1 and 5).

7. The explanation of the *Vedas* from the view-point of the Impersonal Brahman is certainly not an indirect way ; for the impersonal form of Brahman has been advocated by the *Vedas* (See Note, Section-1).

8. The *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedānta-sūtra* establish both the personal form and the impersonal form of the Absolute. The Advaitins following the path of knowledge are attached to the impersonal form of the Absolute. Accordingly, they explain the passages speaking of the Personal Absolute in a secondary sense, just as the devotees attached to the Personal Absolute explain the passages speaking of the Impersonal Absolute in a secondary way.

9-10. (a) This myth is to be explained in a secondary sense.

(b) The ill-feelings expressed in such words as 'inauspicious', 'insane' etc. are very harmful to the understanding of the real nature of other religions. (See Note under this Section.)

11-12. (a) The Advaintins do recognize the existence of Iśvara or the Supreme Personality. Iśvara has never been regarded by them as a product of māyā. (See Note 2, Section-1).

(b) The expressions 'māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ' and 'āsuraṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ' have been used to denote not the Advaitins but the mūḍhas or persons bereft of understanding. And, hence, these terms may be applied to those also who do not understand the Advaitic standpoint of the *Vedas*.

13. See Note under this Section.

14. In the case of empirical realities, a change in the energy or quality necessarily points to a change in the person or substance. In the case of the Absolute however, the essence is never affected by any kind of change in the energies or qualities.

15. The Advaita Vedāntins attain the Impersonal Absolute, the infinite ocean of knowledge and bliss. This is also an entrance into the kingdom of God or return to one's original or spiritual home.

16. (a) The Advaitins are not atheists. Nor do they explain the *Vedas* in an imaginative way ; their interpretation is quite in harmony with the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy.

(b) Though the Advaitins advocate the philosophy of Impersonal Brahman, they do accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality.

17. These expressions of BV are really painful. Advaita Vedāntins are also spiritualists in the full sense of the term and are never materialists in any sense. Hence, they are destined to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death, and not to be roaming in different species.

18. See obs. 11-12 under this Section. The followers of the path of knowledge also verily receive the mercy of the Lord, for Śrī Kṛṣṇa has declared in the *Gītā* that such persons also verily attain him. (te prāpnuvanti mām eva—*BG*, 12).

19. (a) From the view-point of devotion, the Advaita Vedāntins do accept the spiritual potencies of the Lord and also the distinction between knowledge, the knower and the object of knowledge in the spiritual land of the Lord.

(b) Śrī Caitanya's views may be interpreted in a secondary sense as intended to divert men from the difficult path of knowledge to the emotional path of devotion.

20. (a) If any Advaitin falls down into the material world, it must be due to some of his faults and not to the path itself. And such events of downfall may befall the life of any spiritualist. None can certify that the devotees do not meet with any downfall.

(b) The Advaitins do not accept the reality of anything material or nonspiritual. Hence, to describe them as denying the positivity of spiritual life is utterly misleading.

21. Śrī Caitanya advises men to avoid the commentaries of Śaṅkara (a) because it is very difficult for the mass to understand the meanings of these commentaries and (b) because he wants to divert men from the difficult path of knowledge to the emotional path of devotion.

22. Impersonal Brahman is neither a void nor a counterpart of material entity. (See obs. 5 under this Section and obs. 6 under Section 6.) The Advaitins deny the transcendental reality of anything material or nonconscious. Hence, Advaitism, far from being materialistic, is quite opposed to materialism.

23. (a) The Advaitic view of the self's merger into Brahman is established by all the *upaniṣad's* ; it is not an imagination. (b) 'Self-evident' does not mean 'clearly understandable'. Had it been so, there would not be so much differences in the interpretations of the *Vedas*. (c) It is in the case of the Vedic passages that interpretation is verily required, since these passages, being concerned with the deep and super-sensuous experiences of the sages, are not easily understandable to the common people. And, actually, all the spiritualists including BV have endeavoured to interpret the *Vedas*.

24. (a) The followers of the path of knowledge certainly get the mercy of the Lord, for Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that such aspirants verily attain him—"te prāpnuvanti mām-eva" —*BG*, 12.

(b) The path of knowledge is primarily meant for the attainment of liberation ; it is utterly wrong to hold that aspirants following this path will be condemned to this world life after life. Hence, the remark by Narottama Ṭhākur must be explained as intended to show the supremacy of the path of devotion over that of knowledge.

25. This verse says those who falsely think themselves to be liberated, who are proud of being liberated, who, having no regard for the Lord, are unclean in their understanding and who do not maintain devotion to the Lord, fall down even after rising to the highest position. This verse has the following implications: (a) Aspirants making progress in their spiritual journey are also liable to fall down if they have the defects mentioned above. (b) Success in spiritual endeavour is difficult without proper devotion to the Lord. (c) The path of devotion is better than other paths. Here, there is no mention of the Advaita Vedāntins.

26. See obs. 15 under this Section.

27. See Note under this Section.

28. The word 'pāṣaṇḍi' means a 'heretic' or a 'religious hypocrite'. BV has applied this term to the Advaita Vedāntins from his own view-point.

29. See obs. 33 under Section 1.

30. Aspiring for liberation is one thing and deriding Kṛṣṇa is another thing. The Advaitins aspire for liberation, but they are not necessarily connected with deriding Kṛṣṇa.

31. An aspirant who realises the Impersonal Brahman is at once liberated; downfall of such an aspirant is beyond imagination. An aspirant not attaining the peak of

spiritual journey may, however, fall down, if the acts of that aspirant so demand. But this may happen to the followers of any path including that of devotion.

32. If liberation itself is looked upon as a trap for binding the *jīvas* in the material existence, then we may simply say that such a comment is painfully opposed to the very concept of liberation.

33. The Absolute enters the hearts of the *jīvas* to guide them in accordance with their acts and to help them in their spiritual endeavour. All the spiritualists, irrespective of their path or creed, get the requisite blessings from the Lord. To hold that the blessings of the Lord are kept reserved for the denotees only, and that the followers of the paths of knowledge and yoga are deprived of the Lord's blessings is to bring the Absolute to the level of ordinary men engaged in groupism and parti-politics.

34. If successful, the aspirants for the Impersonal Absolute dive deep into the ocean of bliss. The view that they are liable to be subjected to great sufferings may be a remark of those who are painfully igorant about the concept of Brahman.

35. The Advaita Vedāntins do not pursue devotional activities, not because they have any hatred for the Personal Absolute, but because they prefer meditating upon the Impersonal Absolute. To describe these Advaitins as aspiring for evil powers or as engaged in sinful activities is contrary to facts. (See also Note under this Section.)

36. According to the Vaiṣṇavas, the self is *cit-kaṇa* or an atom of consciousness. For the Advaitins, the self is

of the nature of bliss and consciousness; they have never denied the inherent characteristics of the self. Hence BV's remark that the Advaitin's desire to deny the characteristics of the self keeps him away from attaining liberation is quite contrary to the Advaitic philosophy. Again, to represent the aspiration for liberation as a 'false and arrogant claim' is completely opposed to the concept of liberation.

Note :

1. In the view of Śrī Caitanya, the philosophy of Śaṅkara is a *nāstika* or heretic one similar to that of the Buddha. Quoting a *Pūrāṇa*-text, Śrī Caitanya says that Śaṅkara was an incarnation of Śiva, who by the direction of the Lord Viṣṇu came to the world to propagate his heretic philosophy to divert men from the path of liberation and to make the continuity of the world possible by causing the *jīvas* roam in the cycle of birth and death. Śrī Caitanya contends further that while commenting upon the *Brahma-sūtra*, Śaṅkara has enveloped the real meanings intended by Bādarayaṇa by superimposing his own idea of the unqualified Brahman, just as the sun is enveloped by the cloud.

Against this view, we have to say the following :

The very idea that Śaṅkara came to the world by the advice of the Lord to mislead men goes against the benevolence of the Lord. A merciful God cannot be imagined to device such a way to mislead men. The implication of this myth, therefore, may be said to be simply this that by pursuing the path of Śaṅkara, one suffers bondage and cannot attain liberation. But this position is also not acceptable. The *Upaniṣads* clearly declare that by acquiring the knowledge of the differenceless Brahman, man can go beyond the cycle of birth and death Again, it is said that one who sees difference or multiplicity undergoes birth and death. It is this idea that Śaṅkara reiterated in his philosophy. His philosophy cannot, therefore, be said to lead man to hell. The *Gītā* also says that, like a follower of the path of devotion, a follower of the path of knowledge also attains the Lord. The significance of the above myth should therefore be regarded simply as this, that the path of knowledge being very difficult to be pursued, the path of devotion is the best one for the general people. This position is accepted by Śaṅkara also. While commenting upon the *Gītā*, he says that the path of devotion is looked upon as better than the path of knowledge, since the former can be very easily pursued by the common people, while the latter is very difficult to be pursued. Śrī Caitanya's allegation that Śaṅkara has enveloped the real meaning of the *Brahma-sūtra* is not fully correct. This much can be said that he has avoided the emotional aspect of the Absolute and has endeavoured to establish Brahman as the philosophical Absolute.

2 In the view of Śrī Caitanya, one can realise Bhagavat or attain liberation by *bhakti* or devotion alone. *Jñāna* or knowledge cannot by itself bring forth liberation, as held by Śaṅkara, since *jñāna* for its fruition requires the aid of devotion.

At some places, Śrī Caitanya has seriously criticised the path of knowledge as leading men to bondage and to the suffering of the cycle of birth and death. But a many more places he has accepted that the path of knowledge is one of the ways of realising Brahman, the Indeterminate Absolute, and that by pursuing the path of knowledge, one can attain *sāyujya-mukti*, or liberation in the form of absorption of the self into Brahman. This shows that Śrī Saitanya rejects the path of knowledge simple to chow the supremacy of devotion. Śrī Gaitanya says that devotion is the fifth or the highest end of human life, surpassing even *mokṣa* or liberation, the so-called highest end of the followers of the path of knowledge.

The supremacy of devotion, he says, lies in the fact that the joy attained from it is far greater than the joy attained from the realisation of the Indeterminate Brahman : the latter is comparable to a drop of water ; the former, to the vast sea. And, as said elsewhere (Note, Section 5), in the depth of his heart, Śaṅkara also had a strong inclination towards devotion. His hymns to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Śakti and other gods and goddesses are replete with such deep feeling of devotion as are rare even in the writings of the well-known devotees.

We may, thus, conclude that the differences between Śaṅkara and Śrī Caitanya are very little and negligible. Hence, Śrī Caitanya's ruthless criticism of Śaṇkara should be explained as an extravagance guided by his strong desire to redirect men pursuing the philosophical path of knowledge to the emotional path of devotion.

3. The Vaiṣṇava thinkers generally hold that the path of knowledge in which the aspirant is advised to realise the identity between the self and the Absolute is a path for misleading people. It is added that this is a path of dry speculation and that any aspirant following this path, being deprived of liberation, is destined to roam in the world of birth and death or to suffer in the hell. Accordingly, this path is said to be meant for cheating people, and the followers of this path are described as persons holding demoniac mentality or as the people of the lowest grade. Thus, any person following this path of knowledge is declared by the Vaiṣṇava thinkers as doomed.

Against this view, we have the following points to say :

(a) This view is quite contradictory to the Vedic and the Vaiṣṇavite traditions. The *Upaniṣads* say that Brahman is the Absolute and that the knowledge of Brahman brings forth liberation. To quote a few passages : (1) "atha martyo'mṛto bhavaty-atra brahma samaśnute" (*Kaṭha,* 2.3.14)—"The mortal being realising Brahman becomes immortal", (2) "gūhā-granthibhyo vimukto'mṛto bhavati" (*Muṇḍ,* 3.2.9)—"(One knowing Brahman) is freed from the knots of the mind and becomes immortal", and so on.

(b) In all the scriptures, the path of *jñāna* has been declared as one leading the aspirants to Brahma-knowledge and liberation. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* also unequivocally declares *jñāna* to be a spiritual path ; "jñāna-yogena sāṃkhyānām"—*BG,* 2,2. "jñāna-yajñena cāpyanye yajanto mān upāsate"—*BG,* 9.15. In the twelfth chapter of the *Gīta,* the Lord says clearly that those attached to the Impersonal Brahman also attain him —"te prāpnuvanti mām-eva"—*BG,* 12.4. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of course, says that it is very difficult to pursue the path of knowledge, as one cannot concentrate one's mind so easily on the Impersonal and Indeterminate Brahman. But this does not at all mean that by pursuing this path of knowledge none can attain the Absolute or that the identity between the self and Brahman is unattainable. The *Vedas* declare that sages like Vāmadeva realised the identity between the self and Brahman. Śrī Caitanya also agrees that by pursuing this path of knowledge one can attain *sāyujya* form of liberation in which the self becomes identical with Brahman : (i) "jñāna-joga-mārge tāre bhaje jei sab, brahma-ātma-rūpe tāre kare anubhab" (*CC.* 1.2)—"Those who aspire for the Absolute through *jñāna* and *yoga,* attain it as Brahman and Self. (ii) "sājujya nā-lay bhakta jāte brahma-aikya" (*CC,* 1.3)—"The devotee does not accept the *sāyujya* form of liberation in which the self becomes identical with Brahman." (iii) "nirviśeṣ brahma sei kebal jyotirmay sājujyer adhikāri tāhā pāy lay." (*CC,* 1.5.)—"The Impersonal Brahman is pure brilliance ; one qualified for *sāyujya-muktī* merges into it." (iv) "gyāna-mārge nirviśeṣ brahma parakāśe" (*CC*, 2.24)—"In the path of knowledge, the Indeterminate Brahman reveals itself."

(c) The oft-quoted passage of the *Bhāgavata* (1.2.11) says that the Absolute reveals itself in three ways—Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat. This means that Brahman is also a form of the Absolute. Hence, the realisation of Brahman cannot be said to be leading men to the cycle of birth and death or to some hellish life.

(d) The view that the path of knowledge is one of dry speculations is also quite contradictory to the Vedic teachings. Brahman is declared in the *Vedas* to be of the nature of bliss: (i) "ānando brahmeti vyajānāt" (*Tait. Up.*)—"Bliss was known to be Brahman; (ii) "ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān na vibheti kutaścana" (*Tait Up.*)—"Knowing the bliss of Brahman one does not fear anything; (iii) "raso vai saḥ" (*Tait. Up.*)—"This (Brahman) is verily of the nature of bliss". Meditation on and realisation of Brahman of such a nature of bliss cannot at all be dry.

(e) The interpretation of Brahman as impersonal is not at all artificial. All the *upaniṣads* emphatically and uniformly hold that the Absolute is impersonal. (See Note Section-1) The *Bhagavad-Gītā* also accepts the reality of the Impersonal Brahman and says that, through the attainment of the Impersonal Brahman also, an aspirant can attain the Lord. Śrī Caitanya also accepts the reality of the Impersonal Brahman (See Note, Section 3), The only point on which Śrī Caitanya differs from the Advaita Vedāntins is this that, in his view, the Personal Absolute is a higher manifestation of the Absolute, while for the Advaitins, the Absolute is primarily impersonal, though it may manifest itself as a Person. Thus, it is quite wrong to say that the interpretation of Brahman as impersonal is artificial.

(f) BV gets great pleasure in calling the Advaita Vedāntins 'māyayāpahṛta-jñāna' and 'asuraṁ bhāvam āśrita' meaning 'whose knowledge has been robbed off by ignorance' and 'who have adopted the mentality of the demons', respectively, and is not tired of using the same expressions again and again. These expressions occur in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as follows ;- "na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūdhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ, māyayāpahṛtajñāna asuraṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ" (*BG*, 7.51)—"The evil-doers, fools and people of low grade whose knowldege has been robbed off by ignorance and who have adopted the mentality of the demons do not attain me. Here there is not even the least hint that such persons are those who follow the path of *jñāna*.

ON THE PATHS OF BHAKTI (DEVOTION) YOGA AND JNANA (KNOWLEDGE)

SECTION

7

ON THE PATHS OF BHAKTI (DEVOTION) YOGA AND JNĀNA (KNOWLEDGE)

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views.*

1. "It is not possible for the Brahman-realized impersonalist or the Paramātmā-realized *yogī* to understand Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the son of mother Yaśodā or the charioteer of Arjuna." —*BG*, 7.3.

2. "But actually they (the *sannyāsīs*) are self-interested because their goal is to become one with the impersonal Brahman. Such a desire is greater than any material desire, but it is not without self-interest. Similarly, the mystic *yogī* who practices the *yoga* system with helf-open eyes, ceasing all material activities, desires some satisfaction for his personal self. But a person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness works for the satisfaction of the whole, without self-interest. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has no desire for self-satisfaction. His criterion of success is the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and thus he is the perfect *sannyāsī*, or perfect *yogī*."—*BG*, 6.1.

3. "For an impersonalist, the Lord, or the Absolute, being impersonal, cannot eat. Whereas an impersonalist

tries to avoid good estables, a devotee knows that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer and that He eats all that is offered to Him in devotion."—*BG*, 2.63.

4. "The impersonalist, therefore, cannot enjoy life. due to his artificial renunciation ; and for this reason, a slight agitation of the mind pulls him down again into the pool of material existence."—*BG*, 2.63.

5. "According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, the material conception of success (*mokṣa* or liberation) is desired by those in material existence. Not being situated in material existence, the devotees have no desire for liberation. A devotee is always liberated in all stages of life because he is always engaged in the nine items of devotional service."—*CC*, 2.9.261.

6. "The Māyāvādī philosophers consider the highest goal of perfection to be liberation (*Mukti*), which is the fourth perfectional platform. The most elevated Māyavādī philosopher can rise to the platform of liberation, but Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*, devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, is transcendental to such liberation.—*CC*, 1.7.144.

7. "His (the devotee's) heart and concentration remain fixed on his goal because he always works for the pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He is always in *samādhi*, the *yogi's* ultimate destination."—*SOK*, P. 42.

8. "There is no necessity of rigidly following the performances of the prescribed *yajñas* for the transcendentalists (devotees) who are above vice and virtue ;

but those who are engaged in sense gratification require purification by the above mentioned cycle of *yajña* performances."—*BG*, 3.16.

9. "Of these two, the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is better because it does not depend on purifying the senses by a philosophical process. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is itself the purifying process, and by the direct method of devotional service it is simultaneously easy and sublime."—*BG*, 3.3.

10. "To the impersonalist, achieving the *brahma-bhūta* stage becoming one with the Absolute, is the last word... One who is engaged in pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord is already in a state of liberation, called *brahma-bhūta*, oneness with the Absolute. Without being one with the Supreme, the Absolute, one cannot render service unto Him."—*BG*, 18.54.

11. "Kṛṣṇa can be known only be persons who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Other transcendentalists may achieve impersonal Brahman realization, for this is easier than understanding Kṛṣṇa."—*BG*, 7.3.

12. "Thus the impersonalist and the meditator are also indirectly Kṛṣṇa conscious. A directly Kṛṣṇa conscious person is the topmost transcendentalist because such a devotee knows what is meant by Brahman and Paramātmā. His knowledge of the Absolute Truth is perfect, whereas the impersonalist and the meditative *yogī* are imperfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious."—*BG*, 6.10.

13. "Self-realization is sought by the path of knowledge,

by the practice of the eightfold system or by *bhakti-yoga*...Following any of the above-mentioned three methods, one is sure to reach the supreme goal sooner or later."—*BG*, 6.37.

B. *Our observations*

1. A spiritual aspirant attains the Absolute just in accordance with his choice or taste. So, if a Brahman realised impersonalist or a Paramātman-realised *yogin* does not realise Kṛṣṇa like a devotee, it is not a matter of surprise. A devotee also does not realise the bliss which a *jñānin* or *yogin* experiences from the realisation of Brahman or Paramātman. Actually, however, when an aspirant rises to the highest level of realisation, he can realise the fruits attained by the pursuance of other paths also Numerous *stutis* or songs of glory written by Śaṅkarācārya prove that though he was the strongest propagator of the path of knowledge, he fully tasted the sweet or *madhura* aspect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

2. 'Self-interest' or 'selfishness' or 'desire' means a person's longing for something lying beyond his existence. Desire to know the self or the Absolute, which is non-different from the self, can in no way be regarded as selfishness or self-interest, since it is the goal of life. Accordingly, *jñānins* or *yogins* endeavouring to know the Supreme can never be called selfish. In BV's sense, a devotee is also selfish, as he serves Kṛṣṇa to reap bliss for himself ; otherwise why should he think so much for Kṛṣṇa who has millions of devotees to serve him ? A devotee becomes really selfless only when he reaches the highest level of divine love.

3-4. (a) The Impersonal Absolute certainly does not eat like us ; yet it eats in the sense that it accepts the offerings spiritually. Kṛṣṇa also does not eat material things like us ; otherwise a devotee would not take the burden of giving him eatables day and night in this age of hardship. In reality, Kṛṣṇa also accepts the offerings of the devotees spiritually. Hence, the case is the same with both the parties.

(b) It is to be noted that the impersonalists also offer eatables to Brahman. just as a devotee does.

(c) An impersonalist avoids good eatables as a part of the practice for renunciation from worldly enjoyment. This renunciation praised so highly by all the scriptures should not be undermined in this way.

(d) May we think here that BV tries to allure common people by propagating the theory of bhoga or worldly enjoyment' ?

5. (a) Liberation is certainly desired by persons who are in material existence. A person who has attained spiritual existence is, however, already liberated ; so desire for liberation does note arise in his case.

(b) If a person is to be regarded as 'not in material existence' or as 'liberated' simply because he has taken the path of devotion, then we shall have to say that it is the worst possible kind of misinterpretation of the concept of liberation. Liberation means freedom from the cycle of birth and death and also from happiness and sorrow of the worldly life. It is to be attained by pin-pointed devotion or meditation, for which one is to traverse a long path. Liberation can never be attained simply by the pursuance of some paraphernalia.

6. Liberation is the goal of all the spiritualists. Excepting a very few devotees of high rate, whose aim is to attain *preman* or love for the Lord, all other devotees also hanker after liberation. Though these devotees may not pray for liberation directly, they take the path of devotion knowing fully well that it will naturally bring forth liberation for them.

7. (a) The mind of a devotee remains fixed or concentrated on the aim or target, only when he makes some real progress in the spiritual path. One cannot have concentrated mind simply in one's capacity of adopting the path of devotion. Same is the case with a person following the path of knowledge.

(b) *Samādhi* is a state in which the aspirant loses all senses of external objects and remains deeply absorbed in the thought of the self or Brahman. This state dawns when the *kuṇḍalinī*-power of the aspirant rises to a particular height through the spiritual nerver called *suṣumnā*. Such a state is to be attained by the pursuance of a long and arduous path of mental and physical discipline. It is mere childishness to say that a devotee is always in *samādhi*, simply because he has chosen the path of devotion.

8. A person goes above vice and virtue only after the realisation of the real self or the Absolute. A person

cannot be above vice and virtue only because he has adopted the path of devotion.

9. Practices adopted in all religions are but processes for purifying the self ; self-purification is not a monopoly of the devotees. The success of any person lies not on the adoption of some path but on the merit of his personal endeavour, which certainly includes an amount of philosophical thinking or mental speculation.

10. (a) The *brahma-bhūta* stage or the stage in which the aspirant is always merged in Brahman is the state of *sthita-prajñā* or liberation during life-time. It is quite unreasonable to hold that one engaged in devotional service is already *brahmabhūta* or liberated, simply because he has chosen the path of devotion.

(b) To be one with the Supreme is the fruit of spiritual endeavour, and not the beginning. All the aspirants start their journey with the idea of duality, which continues until the attainment of the realisation of the Absolute.

11. (a) Any aspirant realises the Absolute in accordance with the path he has adopted.

(b) Realisation of the Impersonal Brahman is certainly not easier than understanding Kṛṣṇa. The *BG* (12. 4-5) holds just the opposite view that the realisation of the Impersonal Absolute is more difficult than that the Personal Absolute.

12-13. According to the *Upaniṣads*, the same Absolute may be realised either as impersonal or personal. These two are but two different aspects, and not two different levels, of the same Reality. Hence, the realisation of any of these two aspects entails the knowledge of the other aspect also. And the pursuance of any path—directed either to the Impersonal form or to the Personal form—brings forth the perfect knowledge of the Absolute. The perfect knowledge of the Absolute is, therefore, not the monopoly of the path of devotion.

Note :

1. The *Nārāyaṇīya* refers to three means for the attainment of liberation, namely, *jñāna* or speculation, *yoga* or psycho-physical discipline and *bhakti* or devotion. If *jñāna* be included in *yoga*, the means may be said to be two—*yoga* and *bhakti*. Of these three, the paths of *jñāna* and *yoga* are more concerned with the qualityless and actionless aspect of the Absolute, while the path of *bhakti* is primarily concerned with the personal aspect.[1] And since Pāñcarātra advocates principally the concept of Puruṣottama or the Highest Person full of beauty and love, greater emphasis has here been laid upon the path of devotion, which aims to maintain a close and loving relationship with the Lord. That is why the *Nārāyaṇīya* says that *bhakti* or devotion is the best and independent means for the attainment of liberation and that through devotion, an aspirant attains the Lord easily. The Lord is described here as *bhakta-vatsala* or having fatherly affection for the devotees, as being extremely pleased by devotion and as looking at the devotees as his dearest ones.[2] This path of devotion is not dependent on any other *mārga* or path. It is higher than the Vedic path of sacrifices and rituals, the Upaniṣadic path of knowledge and

the yogic path of psycho-physical discipline, since the result attained from the pursuance of devotion is greater than the fruits of all other paths.[3] One thing essential for the attainment of liberation through the path of devotion is the mercy of the Lord, without which it is not possible for any spiritual aspirant to proceed towards his goal. Of course, this mercy is showered upon the devotee by the Lord not whimsically, but in consideration to the devotee's proper self-purification and self-submission to the Lord.

In the *Saṁhitās*, we find discussions on different paths for the attainment of liberation, which can, however, be subsumed under the two paths of *yoga* and *bhakti* sp oken of above. One important point is that, though *bhakti* has here been declared as the best and ideal path for liberation, *yoga* has also been declared as essential for the pursuance of the path of *bhakti*. That means, in this view, the pursuance of *bhakti* attains maturity and becomes unshakeable through the practice of *yoga*.[4]

Yoga

According to the *Saṁhitās*, *yoga* means the self's re-union with the Universal Self, which is to be attained through the pursuance of a course of psycho-physical training or discipline.[5] The psycho-physical discipline accepted in the Yoga-system of philosophy has eight limbs or directions. The *Saṁhitās* discuss in detail how these eight limbs of Yoga can be applied to the practices of the path of *bhakti*. It is said in the *Parama Saṁhitā*, the *Jayākhya Saṁhitā*, the *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā*, the *Lakṣmī Tantra* etc. that *yoga* means to keep the mind concentrated and stable on some object of our though. Accordingly, to keep the mind concentrated on *karman* or action is *karmayoga* and that on *jñāna* or knowledge is *jñānayoga*. *Karmayoga* means the performance of self-purifying action like *yama* or self-control, *niyama* or control of food etc. and *jñānayoga* means *vairāgya* or renunciation and *samādhi* or stability of the mind and also the knowledge of identity between the self and Brahman. Through *karmayoga*, the spiritual aspirant rises to *jñānayoga*, and through *jñānayoga* he merges into Parabrahman.[6] In the view of *Brahma Saṁhitā*, liberation can be attained only through the non-dual knowledge that in the universe there is nothing except Brahman.

REFERENCES

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2. bhaktyā saṁpūjayanty gatiṁ caiṣāṁ dadāti—*Nār*, 334.43 ; mādhavo bhakta-vatsalaḥ—*Nār*, 343.55 ; nānyaḥ bhaktāt priyataro loke kascana vidyate—*Nār*, 344.3.

3. aho hy-ekāntinaḥ sarvān prīṇāti bhagavān hariḥ. *Nār*.—348.1 ; sahopaniṣadān vedān ye viprā samyag-āsthitāḥ—tebhyo visiṣṭāṁ jānāmi gatim ekāntināṁ nṛṇāṁ—*Nār*. 348.5-6.

4. tasmāt sarva-prayatnena bhakto yogī bhavet sadā—*viṣṇu* S*aṁhitā*, Ch. 30.

5. saṁyogo yoga ity-ukto jīvātma-paramātmanoḥ—ABS, 31.15.

6. yat karoti samādhānaṁ cittasya viṣaye kvacit. anukūlam asaṁkṣobhaṁ sa yoga iti kīrtyate *Parama* Sa*ṁhitā*, 10.6 ; see also *ibid*, 10.7.8.

ON THE FOLLOWERS OF SANKARA AND SOME OF THEIR VIEWS

SECTION

8

ON THE FOLLOWERS OF ŚANKARA AND SOME OF THEIR VIEWS

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views.*

1. "Māyāvādī sannyāsīs are always very puffed up because of their knowledge of Sanskrit...Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* always misinterpret all the *śāstras* with their word jugglery...Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* are very puffed up if they hold the elevated *sannyāsa* titles Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvatī."—*CC*, 1.7.64.

2. "According to Sadānanda Yogīndra the Vedānta and *Upaniṣads*, as presented by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in his *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* commentary, are the only sources of Vedic evidence".—*CC*, 1.7.101.

3. "Unfortunately, Māyāvādī philosophers do not accept the Smṛtiprasthāna. *Smṛti* refers to the conclusions drawn from the Vedic evidence. Sometimes Māyāvādī philosophers do not accept the authority of *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Purāṇas*, and this is called *ardha-kukkuṭi-nyāya*. If one believes in the Vedic literatures, one must accept all the Vedic literatures recognized by the great ācāryas, but these Māyāvādī philosophers accept only the Nyāyaprasthāna and Śruti-prasthāna, rejecting the Smṛti-prasthāna."—*CC*, 1.7.117.

4. "In this *Vedānta-sāra* Sadānanda Yogīndra defines

Brahman as *sác-cidānanda* combined with knowledge and without duality, and he defines ignorance (*jaḍa*) as knowledge distinct from of that *sat* and *asat*,"
—*CC*, 1.7.114.

5. "One who follows this philosophy is doomed to remain perpetually in this world. Therefore they are called *aviśuddha buddhayaḥ*, or unclean in knowledge. Because they are unclean in knowledge, all their austerities and penances end in frustration. Thus although they may be honored at first as very learned scholars, ultimately they descend to physical activities of politics, social work, etc. Instead of becoming one with the Supreme Lord, they again become one with these material activities."—*CC*, 1.7.114.

6. "In actuality the Māyāvādī philosophers very strictly follow the austerities and penances of spiritual life and in this way are elevated to the impersonal Brahman platform, but due to their negligence of the lotus feet of the Lord they again fall down to material existence."
—*CC*, 1.7.114.

7. "Although they are very puffed-up at being liberated, Māyāvādī philosophers very shortly fall down again to material activities due to their neglecting the lotus feet of the Lord."—*CC*, 1.7.142.

8. "Although Māyāvādī philosophers are supposed to be very advanced on the path of liberation, we see that after some time they descend to politics and philanthropic activites. Many big *sannyāsis* who were supposedly liberated and very advanced have come down again to materialistic activities, although they left this world as *mithyā* (false). When a devotee

develops in devotional service, however, he no longer has attachments to such philanthropic activities."—*CC*, 1.7.143.

9. "Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* therefore declare themselves to be not only *gurus* but *jagad-gurus*, or the spiritual masters of the entire world, although, of course, they cannot see the entire world. Sometimes they dress gorgeously and travel on the backs of elephants in processions, and thus they are always puffed up, accepting themselves as *jagad-gurus*."—*CC*, 1.9.64.

10. "The Māyāvādī philosopheres in particular make certain hypotheses about the Absolute Truth. They reason that in the material world we experience that everything is created. If we trace the history of anything we find a creator. Therefore there must be a creator of this huge cosmic manifestation. By such reasoning they come to the conclusion that a higher power has created this cosmic manifestation."—*CC*, 2.6.81.

11. "Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* in India are very accustomed to declaring themselves *jagad-gurus*, teachers of the world, although they have no information of the outside world and are limited in their experience to a small town or village, or perhaps to the country of India. Nor do such *sannyāsīs* have sufficient education. Unfortunately, at the present moment there are many foolish *sannyāsīs*, both in India and elsewhere, who simply read and study Vedic literature without understanding the purports."—*CC*, 2.6.127.

12. "Devotional service begins when the mind, intelligence and ego are completely purified. Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* do not purify their intelligence, mind and ego, and

consequently they cannot engage in the service of the Lord nor expect the causeless mercy of the Lord."... Sometimes they rise to the Brahman effulgence, but because their minds are not completely purified, they must return to material existence."—*CC*, 2.6.235.

13. "According to the Māyāvāda philosophy, when one becomes a *sannyāsī*, he is to be considered a moving Nārāyaṇa....'Daṇḍa-grahaṇa-mātreṇa naro nārāyaṇo bhavet' : Simply by accepting the *daṇḍa* of the order of *sannyāsa*, one is immediately transformed into *Nārāyaṇa*". Therefore Māyāvādī *sannyāsis* address themselves by saying, 'om namo nārāyaṇāya'. In this way one Nārāyaṇa worships another Nārāyaṇa." —*CC*, 2.10.109.

14. "The jñānis cannot be desireless because their intelligence is unsound. They want to merge into the Brahman effulgence, but even though they may be raised to that platform, they cannot be satisfied there. There are many *jñānīs* or *sannyāsīs* who give up the world as false, but after taking *sannyāsa* they return to the world to engage in politics or philanthropy or to open schools and hospitals."—*CC*, 2.19.149.

15. "Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* sometimes fall down from the path of self-realization and again enter into material activities of a philanthropic and altruistic nature, which are nothing but material engagements."—*BG*, 5.6.

16. "Māyāvādī philosophers are jealous of the existence of the Personality of Godhead. Therefore *Vedānta-sūtra* is not actually meant for them. They unnecessarily poke their noses in the *Vedānta-sūtra* but they have no ability to understand it. The Māyāvādis' primary occupation is to offend the Supreme Personality of

Godhead Kṛṣṇa. For example, although Kṛṣṇa demands our surrender in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the greatest scholar and so-called philosopher in India has protested that it is "not to Kṛṣṇa" that we have to surrender. Therefore, he is envious. Since Māyāvādīs of all different descriptions are envious of Kṛṣṇa, they have no scope to understand the meaning of *Vedānta-sūtra.*" —*CC*, 1.7.144.

17. "Those who are envious and mischievous, who are the lowest among mankind, are cast by Me into the ocean of material existence, into various demoniac species of life." (*BG*, 16.19). Life in demoniac species awaits the Māyāvādī philosophers after death because they are envious of Kṛṣṇa"—*CC*, 1.7.130.

B. *Our observations*

1. (a) If some person—whether an Advaita Vedāntin or a Vaiṣṇava—boasts of his knowledge or position, that person himself may be criticised ; his descipline or philosophy should not be held responsible for that.

(b) In a like manner, if some person is puffed up with the *sannyāsa* titles of 'Tīrtha', 'Āśrama', 'Sarasvatī' etc then that person himself is responsible for that, and not the system.

(c) Titles themselves are not to be looked upon as marks of ego. It is to be noted that BV himself is also using the titles of 'Swāmī' and 'Bhakti-vedānta'.

(d) From our discussions to be found in Sections 1, 2, 3, and 9, it will be clear that the views of the Advaita Vedāntins on the concepts of the Absolute, the self, the world, liberation etc. are quite in harmony with the *Upaniṣadic* teachings ; these can in no way be considered as misinterpretations.

2. This is completely a misrepresentation of the view of Sadānanda Yogīndra. What Sadānanda says is that Vedānta means the *Upaniṣads*, which are self-valid, their assisting works like the *Vedānta-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa and scriptures like the *Bhagavad-Gītā, Manu-Saṁhitā* etc. (vedānto nāma upaniṣat-pramāṇaṁ tad-upakārīṇi śārīraka-sūtrādīni ca—*Vedānta-sāra* ; śārīraka-sūtrādīni 'athāto brahma-jijñāsā' ityādīni. "ādi-śabdena bhaga vad-gītādy-adhyātma-śāstrāṇi gṛhyante—*Subodhinī*).

3. (a) It is completely wrong to hold that the Advaitins do not accept the validity of the Smṛti-prasthāna. From the above discussion (obs. No. 2), it will be clear that the Advaitins accept the validity of the *Smṛtis* like the *Bhagavad-Gītā, Manu-Saṁhitā* etc. In the commentaries of Śaṅkara, one will find hundreds of quotations from the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The validity of the *Manu-Saṁhitā* has been declared specially in *BSŚB*, 2. 1. Quotations from the *Purāṇas* are also found here and there in the commentaries of Śaṅkara. Practically, at the very entrance to the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, a student is advised to accept the validity of all the three *prasthānas* of Vedānta—Śruti (*Upaniṣads*), Smṛti (*Bhagavad-Gītā, Manu-Saṁhitā* etc.) and Nyāya (*Vedānta-sūtra*).

(b) Though a person may accept the validity of some scriptures, he may not pursue them, if they do not suit to his liking (*ruci*) or line of thinking. Thus, a Śaivite may not pay his attention to the Vaiṣṇava scriptures, though he may accept their validity. So, the non-pursuance of some scriptures does not necessarily mean that these scriptures have been rejected as invalid. Coming to the case of the Advaitins, we like to assert that they have not rejected the validity of any pro-Vedic scripture. BV, on the other hand, has openly rejected all the scriptures which do not suit to his Vaiṣṇavite line of thinking.

4. (a) Neither Sadānanda nor any other Advaitin has ever defined Brahman as '*sac-cid-ānanda* combined with knowledge'. Knowledge or consciousness denoted by the term '*cit*' is regarded by the Advaitins as the essence of Brahman. Accordingly, no question arises as to Brahman's being combined with knowledge.

(b) According to Sadānanda and all other Advaitins, ignorance or *ajñāna* is quite opposed to knowledge : it is never regarded as a kind of knowledge. Ajñāna is, of course, distinct from *sat* and *asat*, as it is neither eternal like Brahman nor totally non-existent like a sky-flower.

5. (a) From our discussions under Sections-1 and 6, it will be clear that the path of knowledge is a path leading the aspirants certainly to liberation through the merger of the self into Brahman, and that this position is supported by the *Upaniṣads* and other scriptures. Hence, it is quite unreasonable to hold that the Advaitins following the path of knowledge are doomed to remain perpetually in this world, that they are unclean in knowledge and that their spiritual endeavours end in frustration.

(b) The charge that the followers of Advaitism fall down and engage themselves in politics and philanthropic activities goes just against the science of love for men. The ideal held by Indian sages has two directions—(i) liberation or self-realisation and (ii) service to the world ('ātmano mokṣārthaṁ jagad-dhitāya ca'). And all the great sages have followed these two paths. Śrī Caitanya also advises his followers to serve men through love ('jīve dayā nāme ruci vaiṣṇava sevan'—*CC*). And BV will surely agree that he has established his mission out of love for men or with a desire to serve men. This is certainly not a downfall from the spiritual path.

6-7. (a) See obs. 31 under Section 6 and Note, Section-6.

(b) Since the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta is completely in harmony with the teachings of the *Upaniṣads,* it can never be held that the followers of this path are destined to fall down. Accordingly, the remark made by Prahlāda in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (10.2.32) must be explained in a secondary sense. In the secondary, sense, this passage means that the path of devotion is superior to the paths pursued by the Advaita Vedāntins and the Yogins, as it suits to the psychology of men in general.

8. (a) See our comments in obs. 5 under this Section.

(b) The world is called *mithyā,* because it is neither eternal like Brahman nor totally non-existent like a sky-flower (See Note 2 under Section-9). In reality, the world has an existence.

(c) The social services rendered by the spiritualists of any discipline is certainly in harmony with the theory of love for men propagated by all the great sages.

(d) Neglect to philanthropic activities is certainly not something praise-worthy.

(e) By this time, BV's mission has opened hundreds of schools. Can we regard this as a downfall of his mission ?

9. (a) A saint is generally made *jagad-guru* or the preceptor of the whole world not by himself but by his followers ; the saint himself is not to be held responsible for that. And BV also has by now been made *jagad-guru* ; should we hold him responsible for that ?

(b) It cannot be argued that, for being a *jagad-guru*, one is required to see the world. BV has travelled the world many times but Śrī Caitanya did not. From this one cannot certainly argue that BV is a greater *guru* than Śrī Caitanya.

10. See obs. 20, Section-1.

11. (a) See obs. 9 under this Section.

(b) We are sure that the views of Advaita Vedānta are quite in harmony with the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*, just as the views of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta are. These are but different methods or paths for the realisation or the Supreme. Hence, it cannot be held that the Advaita Vedāntins do not understand the *Vedas*.

12. (a) The Advaitins have exhibited a clear understanding of the *Vedas* ; they do not maintain any vile attitude

towards any other path ; they try to purify their minds though austerities and penances ; their philosophy, like that of the Vaiṣṇavas, teaches the followers to surrender the self to the Supreme. Accordingly, the Advaitins cannot be said to be impure in their intelligence, mind and ego.

(b) The Advaita Vedantins also serve the Supreme in its impersonal form and, hence, they are entitled to get the mercy of the Impersonal Absolute. It is unreasonable to think that the Impersonal Absolute is devoid of love and mercy.

(c) If any person cannot purify his mind, he is destined to return to the material existence. This is true for all the followers of all disciplines. BV's remark that the minds of the Advaita Vedāntins are not purified—indicating thereby that the minds of the people following Vaiṣṇavism, or rather, BV's mission, are purified—cannot be regarded as an impartial one.

13. (a) The assertions that 'a *sanyāsin* is a moving Nārāyaṇa' and that 'one becomes Nārāyaṇa at the very time of accepting the *sanyāsa*-stick' are definitely used in secondary senses. According to the Advaita Vedānta, the aim of the spiritual aspirant is to merge into the Supreme—either in its impersonal form or in its personal form. A *sanyāsin* in advised simply to maintain this ideal in his mind from the very moment of his entry to the fold. In reality, no Advaitin regards his mundane form to be identical with Nārāyaṇa or the Supreme. Had it been so, the Advaitins, after their very entry to the discipline of *sanyāsa*, would not follow the regulations prescribed for them.

(b) The Vaiṣṇavas also identify themselves as 'devotees'. Actually, however, 'to become a real devotees' is the end ; if one becomes a real devotee, his endeavour for spiritual uplift comes to a close.

(c) Vaiṣṇavas are also found to address one another as '*prabhu*' meaning 'the Lord', though, actually, no Vaiṣṇava is identical with the Lord.

14-15. See our discussions in obs. 5, 7 and 12 under this Section.

16. (a) As the Advaitins accept the personal form of the Supreme (see Note under Section-1), it cannot at all be said that the Advaitins are jealous of the existence of the personality of Godhead and that their primary occupation is to offend Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person.

(b) From our discussions under Sections 3, 4 and 6, it will be clear that the Advaita Vedāntic views are quite in harmony with the *Upaniṣadic* teachings. Hence, the remarks made by BV about the Advaitins are without any ground.

(c) The expression 'greatest scholar' used surcastically by BV refers to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Our comments on this issus has been given in obs. 12 under Section 12.

ON THE ADVAITA VEDANTIC CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL SELF AND THE MATERIAL WORLD

SECTION

9

ON THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL SELF AND THE MATERIAL WORLD

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views.*

1. "In the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-Gītā* the Supreme Personality of Godhead has classified His energies in two distinct divisions namely, *prākṛta* and *aprākṛta*, or *parā-prakṛti* and *aparā-prakṛti* in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa the same distinction is made. The Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand these two *prakṛtis* or natures-material and spiritual but one who is actually intelligent can understand them."—*CC*, 1.7.113.

2. "So the constitution of the atomic soul is admitted in all Vedic literatures, and it is also actually felt in the practical experience of any sane man. Only the insane man can think of this atomic soul as all-pervading Viṣṇu-tattva."—*BG*, 2.17.

3. "There are two kinds of souls-namely the minute particle soul (*aṇu-ātmā*) and the Supersoul (*vibhu-ātmā*). This is also confirmed in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.20)"—*BG*, 2.20.

4. "Impersonalist commentators on the *Bhagavad-gitā* unreasonably assume that Brahman takes the form of *jīva* in the material world. The fragment of God, the living entity, may fall down into the material world, but the Supreme Lord (Acyuta) never falls down. Therefore this assumption that the Supreme Brahman assumes the

form of *jīva* is not acceptable. It is important to remember that in Vedic literature Brahman (the living entity) is distinguished from Parabrahman (the Supreme Lord)."—*BG*, 8.3.

5. "The cause being a fact, the effects are also factual. They are not illusion. Śaṅkarācārya has inconsistently tried to prove that acceptance of the material world and the *jīvas* to be by-products of the Supreme Lord is an illusion because in this conception the existence of the material world and the *jīvas* is different and separate from that of the Absolute Truth. Māyāvādī philosophers have propagated the slogan 'brahma satyaṁ jagan-mithyā', which declares that the Absolute Truth is fact but the cosmic manifestation and the living entities are simply illusions, or that all of them are in fact the Absolute Truth and that the material world and living entities do not separately exist."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

6. "The material world and the living entities are separate beings, and they are eternally true, not false Śaṅkarācārya, however, unnecessarily fearing that by *pariṇāma-vāda* (transformation of energy) Brahman would be transformed (*vikārī*), has imagined both the material world and the living entities to be false and to have no individuality. By word jugglery he has tried to prove that the individual identities of the living entities and the material world are illusory, and he has cited the examples of mistaking a rope for a snake or an oyster shell for gold. Thus he has most abominably cheated in people in general."—*CC*, 1.7.122.

7. "The living entity is the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Being part and parcel of the Lord, he is constitutionally

pure, but due to his contact with material energy he identifies himself with either the gross or the subtle material body. Such identification is certainly false and constitutes the genuine platform of the theory of illusion. The living entity is eternal ; he can never be subjected to the limits of time as are his gross and subtle bodies. The cosmic manifestation is never false, but it is subject to change by the influence of the time factor."—*CC*, 2.6.173.

8. "He maintains that the material cosmic manifestation is *mithyā*, or false, but this is a great blunder. If the Supreme Personality of Godhead is a fact, how can His creation be false ? Even in ordinary dealings, one cannot think the material cosmic manifestation to be false. Therefore Vaiṣṇava philosophers say that the cosmic creation is not false but temporary. It is separated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but since it is wonderfully created by the energy of the Lord to say that it is false is blasphemous."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

9. "Similarly, the material world is but a reflection of the spiritual world. Although it appears to be factual, it is not ; it is only a temporary reflection, whereas the spiritual world is a factual reality. The material world, with its gross and subtle forms, is merely a reflection of the spiritual world."—*CC*, 1.7.118.

10. "The Māyāvādī philosophers, devoid of true understanding, have confused the theory of illusion and the theory of the cosmic manifestation by word jugglery. The theory of illusion can be applied to a person who identifies himself with the body. The living entity is the superior energy of the Supreme Lord, and the

material world is the inferior energy. Both, however, are *prakṛti* (energy)".—*CC*, 2.6.173.

11. "If one is serious about the real meaning of life, then simple endeavoring to escape the crippling clutches of māyā is not the only undertaking. The ultimate goal is to liberate ourselves from the enthrallment of the illusory energy and become wholly subservient to the transcendental, spiritual energy".—*SOK*, P. 145.

B. *Our observations*

1. The Advaitins also accept these two prakṛtis or aspects of the Lord. Here *aparā prakṛti* means māyā, the source of all the matetial elements of the universe, while *parā prakṛti* means the *Antaryāmin* or inner self. This *parā prakṛti* said to be controlling the world cannot be identical with the ordinary *jīvas*, since these *jīvas* cannot govern the universe. *Parā prakṛti* means the *ādhāra* or locus of all the *jīvas*, which controls the world as the inner self. This *parā prakṛti* may be compared to the aspect of the Lord said in the *Bhāgavad-Gītā* (8.4.) to be existing in the *jīvas*. In the terminology of Śrī Caitanya's philosophy, this concept is called Paramātman.

2-3. For our comments on the view that the self is an atomic part of Brahman, see Note-1 at the bottom of this Section.

4. (a) The origin of the jīva is a crux to human understanding. The position that the Absolute self cannot fall down and become the empirical self is appplicable to the other alternative also. That is to say, since the self in its essence is pure and

eternal like Brahman, it also cannot be subjected to ignorance and bondage. (See obs. 9 under this Section.) Under these circumstances, it is better or safer in either case to leave the matter to the *līlā* or sportive nature of Brahman or the Lord, as done by all the Vedāndic thinkers including the Advaitins and the Vaiṣṇavas.

(b) It is wrong to say that in the Vedic literature the term 'Brahman' denotes the living entity ; this term necessarily denotes the Supreme Self, and not the empirical self (See our observations under Section 3).

5-6. (a) The logical position is that if the effect is a fact, the cause is necessarily a fact, and not the *vice versa,* for though the rope is a fact, its effect rope-snake is not.

(b) Brahman being the only reality, the world and the *jīvas* cannot be realities distinct from Brahman. The Vaiṣṇavas also do never say that the world and the *jīvas* are distinct from Brahman ; they say that though non-distinct, the *jīvas* and the world are, in some sense, distinct also.

(c) If the *jīvas* and the world be real, then why do the Vaiṣṇavas try to go beyond them ?

(d) Śaṅkara regards the self and the world as illusive or unreal not in their real nature but in their empirical nature as perceived by us—the beings under ignorance. In reality, no spiritualist ever regards the *jīvas* and the world of our day-to-day perception to be real as such. In their real nature, however, both the *jīvas* and the world are real.

entities. This position is accepted by Śaṅkara also. (cf. 'brahma-mātraṁ hi viśvam'—'The world is of the nature of Brahman'—*Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, 231, 'brahmaiva jīvaḥ'—'The *jīva* is verily brahman'—*ibid*, 478.)

7. (a) Yes, the identification of the self with the gross and the subtle bodies is illusion. Just so, thinking the world to be distinct from Brahman is also an illusion.

(b) BV has realised that the self, like Brahman, cannot be subjected to the limits of time. (See obs. 4 under this section.)

(c) In the Advaitic sense also, the world is *anitya* or subject to change.

8. See obs. 8 (a) and 8 (e) under this Section.

9. (a) Yes this very position that the world is a temporary reflection of the spiritual world is what is denoted by the Advaita Vedāntic term '*mithyā*'.

(b) Śaṅkara does not propagate any theory regarding the existence of the spiritual world, since he is an advocate of the path of knowledge, according to which merger of the self into Brahman is the ultimate goal. For the followers of the path of devotion, however, Śaṅkara accepts the existence of a spiritual world, as is inferred from some passages of his comt. on *Brahma-sūtra*. (See BSŚB 2.2.42 quoted in the concluding Note on Vyūhavāda.)

10. See obs. 1, 2, 6 and 7 under this Section.

11. Here BV has tacitly accepted the Advaitic concept of māyā, the illusory energy of Brahman.

Notes :

1. In a few *sūtras* of *Brahma-sūtra* (2.3.43-45), Bādarāyaṇa says that the *jīva* is a part of Brahman. The Vaiṣṇavas accepting the direct meanings of these *sūtras* hold that the *jīva* is a real part of Brahman. Śaṅkara, on the other hand, says that the term 'aṁśa' used by Bādarāyaṇa means not real 'part' but 'part' as it were', since the partless Brahman cannot have any real part. That means, in Śaṅkara's view, the *jīva* is not a real part ; it seems to be so because of the *upādhis* or conditions.

Again, in a few *sūtras* of *Brhma-sūtra*, (2.3. 19-22), the self has been described by Bādarāyaṇa as atomic in measure. In support of this view, there are some *Śruti*-passages also, e.g., "eṣo'ṇur ātmā"—"This self is atomic"—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.1.9 ; "bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatrdhā kalpitasya ca bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ"—"The jiva is the hundredth part of the hundredth part of a tip of hair"—*Śvet Upaniṣad*, 5.8. Here also the Vaiṣṇavas hold that the self is really atomic in size, while Śaṅkara says that this atomicity of the self is not natural but conditional. In his view, the self in its real nature, being identical with Brahman, is all-pervasive like Brahman, but during its empirical existence, the self seems to be atomic because of the adjunct of *buddhi* or mind which is atomic : "buddhi-parimāṇena asya parimāṇa-vyapadeśaḥ"—"Its measure described as atomic is because of the adjunct of *buddhi* or mind" —BSŚB, 2.3.29. When the self in its transendental existence to be attained in liberation, realises its identity with Brahman, it realises its all-pervasive nature also. Śaṅkara says that this view is supported by the *Br*. *Up*. and the *Tait*. *Up*. also "sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmā"—"This self is great and birthless"—*Br*.

Upaniṣad 4.4.22 ; "ākāśa-vat sarvagataś ca...satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma" (*Tait. Up.*, 2.1.1)—"It is all-pervasive like *ākāśa* or space...Brahman is truth, knowledge and all-pervasive." The *Śvet Up.* speaking of the atomicity of the self also says that ultimately the self is to be known as all-pervasive : "sa cānantyāya kalpate iti aṇutvaṁ jīvasy uktvā tasyaiva punar ānantyam āha"—The Śruti speaking of the atomicity of the self declares, again, its all-pervasiveness in the expression 'sa cānantyāya kalpate"*BSŚB*, 2.324. The Vaiṣṇavas say that the passages describing the self as all-pervasive (*mahān*) refer not to the individual self but to the Supreme Self or Brahman. In their view, the self is atomic in its very nature and, hence, it retains its atomicity even during its transcendental existence attained in liberation.

Here our submission is that Śrī Caitanya, with a view to explaining the emotional experiences of the self in its transcendental existence, accepts some sort of distinct existence of the self even during liberation. Accordingly, he regards the self as atomic even in its liberated state. This nature of the self depends not no any extraneous condition, as in the state of bondage, but on the free will of the self. And we are emphatic on this point that the self in liberation, being freed from all limitations posed by ignorance, may retain its distinct entity as atomic in measure or may merge into the bosom of the Supreme. Thus, if the self retains its distinction, it is to be regarded as atomic, and if it maintains identity with the Supreme Self, it is to be considered all-pervasive.

2. The Advaitins described the world as '*mithya*'. But the term '*mithyā*' used by the Advaitins is generally misunderstood by others and is taken to bear the meaning of 'non-existent'. In the Advaitic sense, however, '*mithyā*' means something which is neither *sat* or ever-existent like Brahman, nor *asat* or totally non-existent like a sky-flower. And all the objects of

the world of our ordinary perception are *mithyā*, as they are not ever-existent or permanent like Brahman, nor are they non-existent like a sky-flower. In other words, the world is called *mithyā*, in the sense that it is *anitya* or impermanent ; with the flash of real knowledge, the world will be revealed as Brahman. And this view does not certainly go against the philosophy of the Vaiṣṇavas, where also the world of our perception is called *anitya* or impimpermanent, while the world in its real nature is said to be a manifestation of the power of the Lord, and hence, to be non-distinct from Him.

3. (a) The Upaniṣad describe the self as both atomic and all-pervasive, as will be seen from the following passages :

(a) "aṇīyān vrīher vā yavād vā" (*Chānd. Up.*, 3.14.3) – "The self is smaller than a grain of paddy or yava".

(b) "eṣo'ṇur ātmā" (*Muṇḍaka Up.*, 3.1.9)—"This self is atomic."

(c) "bālāgra-śatabhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ" (*Śvet. up.*, 6.8)—"The *jīva* is equal to one-hundredth part of the one-hundredth part of the tip of a piece of hair."

(d) "ārāgramātra hy-avaro'pi dṛṣṭaḥ" (*Śvet. up.*, 58)—"The self is seen to be small like the tip of a piece of hair."

(e) "sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmā" (*Br. up.*, 4.4.12)—"This birthless self is verily great."

(f) "ākāśa-vat sarvagataś ca nityaḥ"—(*Tait. up.*)—"The self is all-pervasive and eternal like space."

(g) "sa cānantyāya kalpate" (*Śvet. up.* 5.9)—"The self is, again, known to be all-pervasive."

The *Brahma-sūtra* also refers to both the views of the atomicity and the all-pervasiveness of the self. The view of the atomicity of the self can be had from the following *sūtras* : (i) "utkrānti-gaty-ādīnām" (2.3.91)—It is said in the *Śruti* thrt the *jīva* leaves some body and enters into another and that the jīva moves from one plane of existence to another. From this, it must be held that the *jīva* is atomic in measure. (ii) "sva-śabdonmānābhyāṁ ca" (2.3.23)—"From the use of words bearing the sense of atom and from the mention of atomic measure in the *Śruti*, the *jīva* is known to be atomic in measure."

Again, some other sūtras of *Brahma-sūtra*, like 'tad-guṇa-sāratvāt tu tad-vyapadeśaḥ' (*BŚ*. 2.3.29) etc. refer to a view that the atomicity of the self is conditional. indicating thereby that the self is, in reality, all-pervasive.

Between these two views of the atomicity and the all-pervasiveness of the self, the first is supported by the Vaiṣṇava thinkers ; the second, by the Advaita Vedāntins.

The Vaiṣṇava thinkers hold that the self is atomic in measure under all circumstances, as it is always referred to as atomic by the *Śruti*. Accordingly, they say the self remains atomic in measure during liberation also. As regards the *upaniṣadic* passages speakings of the all-pervasiveness of the self, the Vaiṣṇava thinkers say that the self spoken of here is the Universal Self, and not the individual self.

Against this view, Śaṅkara agrues that the self is *vibhu* or all-pervasive, as it is completely identical with Brahman which is infinite or all-pervasive. As regards the atomicity of the self spoken of above, Śaṅkara says that this atomicity refers to the measure of the self under bondage during which the self being conditioned by *buddhi* or mind of atomic measure, appears as atomic, Śaṅkara supports his view on the basis of the aphorism 'tad-guṇa-sāratvāt tu tad-vyapadeśaḥ' (BS, 2.3.29) which he explain as follows : "buddhiparimāṇena asya parimāṇa-vyapadeśaḥ...na svatḥ" (*BSŚB*, 2.3.29)—"The atomic measure of the self is due to the measure of the *buddhi* or mind :—it is not natural." That means, during the empirical existence, the self seems to be atomic because of its contact with *buddhi* or internal organ, while in its transcendental existence realised in liberation, the self, being identical with Brahman, is all-prevasive like Brahman itself. That is why Śaṅkara arues, the *Śvet Up.* speaking of the atomic nature of the self says that ultimately it is all-pervasive—"sa cānantyāya kalpate" (*Śvet. up.*, 5.9). Śaṅkara claims that this position is supported by the *Br. up.* also which describes the self as *mahān* or great : "sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmā"—birthless self is verily great"—*Br. up.*, 4.4.22.

Here we may observe that Śrī Caitanya, with a view to explaining the emotional experiences of the self in its divine existence, is bound to accept some sort of distinct existence of the self even in liberation. Accordingly, he regards the self as atomic even in its liberated state. We may ascribe this atomicity of the self not to any extraneous condition as in bondage, but to the free will of the self itself. We have shown elsewhere (see Note under Section-4) the according to both Śaṅkara and Baladeva, the self in liberation is at liberty either to merge with the Absolute or to retain its distinct existence. From this, it follows that if the liberated self merges into Brahman, it will be all-pervasive ; if it retains This its distinct existence it will be atomic.

(b) Bādarāyaṇa says that the *jīva* is a part of Brahman, as there are *Śruti*-passages declaring both difference and non-difference between Brahman and the self ("aṁśo nānāvyapadeśāt"—2.343). From other *Śrutis* and *Smṛtis* also, the jīva is known to be a part of Brahman ("mantra-varṇāc ca"—2.3.44 ; "api ca smaryate"—2.3.45).

Here, the Vaiṣṇava Vedāntins accept the direct meaning of the *sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa and hold that the *jīva* is a real and atomic part of Brahman. But as in the view of Śaṅkara, the *jīva* is not atomic but all-pervasive in measure, he says that here *'aṁśa'* means 'part, as it were', since partless Brahman cannot have any real part. He means to say that the *jīva* is not a real part, it seems to be so, because of the *upādhi* or condition of *manas* or the mind.

Between these two positions that 'the self is a part of Brahman' and that 'the self is not a part of Brahman', the latter is more logical because of the fact that the self is identical with Brahman (see Note, Section-4) which is partless or indivisible. Thus though the self seems to be a part of Brahman, actually, it is not so. In other words, the idea that the self is a part of Brahman is a false one ; it refers to the empirical state of the self and not to its transcendental nature. As regards the Vaiṣṇava view that even after liberation, i.e. even in its real nature, the *jīva* remains a part of Brahman, we are to say that the liberated self, being free from all limitations caused by ignorance, is at liberty to maintain its distinction from Brahman or to be identified with it. Hence, if the self maintains its separate existence, it will have to be regarded as a part of Brahman. This 'part-ness' or the self's being a part of Brahman, however, depends on the free will of the liberated self, and not on any extraneous condition.

(c) According to the thinkers following the Viṣṇavite cult, the world is a real manifestation of the Lord's real power called māyā. It is said that māyā has two aspects, namely, *māyā* and *pradhāna*, of which the former is the *nimitta* or instrumental cause, while the latter is the material cause. Bhagavat, the Absolute, takes the form of the world through the power *māyā*. Thus the world is not a *vivarta* or false manifestation but a *pariṇāma* or real transformation of

Brahman. It is however added that even in this transformation, the essence of the Lord does not undergo any change but remains the same like a *cintāmaṇi* or a kind of jewel, which itself remaining the same produces gold-ornaments. Śrī Caitanya claims that Bādarāyaṇa, the author of *Brahmasūtra*, has propagated this theory of *pariṇāma* but Śaṅkara has misinterpreted it as that of *vivarta*.

(d) According to Bādarāyaṇa, Brahman is the creator of the world. It is generally asked : What is the necessity for the self-complete and self-satisfied Brahman to create the world ? In reply, Bādarāyaṇa says : "Lokavat tu līlā-kaivalyam" (2. 1. 33)="This is simply a sport for Brahman, as is seen in our practical world.' That means, just a king or a person is engaged in sport simply for enjoyment, so Brahman creates the world simply as a manifestatation of its inner bliss. It may, again, be objected that if Brahman be the creator of the world, the former must be either insane or partial, since it makes some one prosperous of happy and some other poor and unhappy. In reply, Bādarāyaṇa says : "vaiṣamyanairghṛṇye na sāpekṣatvāt..." (2. 1 34)="Brahman is not to be charged with maintaining inequality and cruelty, for its acts are in consonance with the respective *karmans* or actions of the *jīvas*".

As to the process of creation, it is said that in the beginning, Brahman, the existent, was alone. It contemplated to become many, as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says, 'tad aikṣata bahu syāṁ prajāyeya' (6. 2. 3). Badarayana refers to this *śruti*, in the *ākāśa* 'ikṣater nāśabdam' (1. 1. 5). Thus willing to create the world, Brahman produced *ākāśa* or space, first, and then *āyu* or air *tejas* or fire, *ap* or water and *pṛthivī* or earth, successively (*Brahma-sūtra* 2. 3. 1-12). *Brahma-sūtra* says that it is Brahman lying as the inner principle of these elements that creates the successive elements-'tad-abhidyānād eva tu tal=liṅgāt saḥ'

(2. 3. 13). *Pralaya* or annihilation of the world is said to occur in the reverse way 'viparyayeṇa tu kramo'ta upapadyate' (2. 3. 15).

According to the Naiyāyikas, Īśvara the Omniscient and Omnipotent, is the efficient cause of the world, while the *paramāṇus* or atoms are the material causes. In the view of the Sāṁkhyists, *prakṛti* is the material cause of the world; *prakṛti* coming in contact with the selves evolves into the world in consonance with the actions of the selves. Bādarāyaṇa has refuted the theory of the Naiyāyikas in the *sūtra* 2. 1. 12 and that of the Sāṁkhyists in the *sūtras* 1. 1. 5—11, 2. 1. 18 and 1. 2. 19, 22. In the *sūtra* 'janmādy-asya yataḥ' (1. 1. 2), Bādarāyaṇa says that Brahman is the source of the creation, sustenance and annihilation of the world. Further, he says that Brahman is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world: (1) 'Prakṛtiś ca pratijñādṛṣṭāntānuparodhāt' (1, 4. 23)= 'Brahman is the material cause also of the world, as it is to be accepted on the strength of the proposition and the examples of the *śruti*. The proposition of the *śruti* referred to here is: "By knowing one i.e. Brahman, all other things can be known." The examples put forward here are: "By knowing a lump of clay, one can know all the effects of clay." "By knowing a lump of gold, one can know all the effects of gold, and so on. (2) 'abhidhyopadeśāc ca' (1. 4. 24) From the statement of the contemplation for creation also, Brahman is known to be the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. The Śruti says, "In the beginning, Brahman, the existent, contemplated: 'I shall be many and be born" (*Taittirīya up.*, 2. 6), "It thought within itself: 'I shall be many and be produced" (*Chandogya up.*, 6. 2. 3), and so on. These statements of the Śruti show that it is Brahman that has become the multi-various world. (3) 'sākṣāc cobhayāmnānāt' (1. 4. 25)='From the assertion of the direct relation of Brahman with creation and annihilation, 'the former is known to be the material cause of the world'. It is said that the world emerges from Brahman and dissolves into it in annihilation. That element from which something is produced and into which the thing produced dissolves is the material cause of the thing produced. (4) 'ātmakṛteḥ pariṇāmāt' (1. 4. 26)='The transformation of Brahman into the world has been done by itself,' as it is said in the *Taittiriya up.*: Brahman transformed itself into the world. (2.7). (5) 'yoniś ca hi gīyate' (1. 4. 27)='Brahman is described as the origin of the world', as in the *Muṇḍaka up* 1. 1. 6, 3. 1. 3. With these arguments, Bādarāyaṇa establishes that Brahman is the efficient cause and also the material cause of the world.

In explaining the nature of the material causality of Brahman, the Advaita-Vedāntins hold that Brahman is the *vivarta* or unchanging material cause of the world, just as a rupe is the cause of a snake, or a conch-shell is the cause of a piece of silver. In other words, according to this view, creation is not real but false. The Vaiṣṇavas, on the other hand, say that Brahman is a Pariṇāmi or transforming cause, just as clay is the cause of a pitcher. In this view, creation is a fact.

(e) Whether the world is a *vivarta* i. e. false appearance or *pariṇāma* i.e. real transformation is a matter of emphasis. Śrī Caitanya regards the world as a *pariṇāma* of Brahman or Bhagavat, the Absolute, but he adds that even through this *pariṇāma* or transformation, Bhagavat remains the same in his essence, and that what undergoes transformation is his *śakti* or power. Śrī Caitanya compares this position to *cintāmaṇi* or the stone which itself remaining the same produces gold-ornaments. In a like manner, Śaṅkara also says that Brahman endowed with the indescribable power of *māyā* creates the world, though in its essence Brahman remains unchanged. And it is by directing his attention to the unchangeable essence of Brahman or Bhagavat that Śaṅkara regards the world as a *vivarta* or false appearance.[*] In his view, the *pariṇāmi-karaṇa* or changing material of the world is *māyā* which does not share the nature of Brahmen, the unchangeable. Śrī Caitanya synthesises these two entities of Brahman, the powerful, and māyā, the power, by accepting an unthinkable relation of difference-cum-non-difference between them. According to both Śaṅkara and Śrī Caitanya, however, the world as revealed to men in ignorance is not ultimately true, for, in its real nature, the world is not different from Brahman. Śaṅkara says that the world in its essence is nothing but Brahman, for Brahman exists everywhere. Śrī Caitanya also holds on the strength of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* that the world is pervaded by the Lord. The theories of *vivarta* and *pariṇama* are but ways of explaining this position. In reality, however, neither of these theories can explain the nature of the cause-and-effect relation between Brahman and the world. For the acceptance of the Theory of Vivarta cannot successfully explain the emanation of the world, and the acceptance of the Theory of Pariṇāma cannot convincingly demonstrate the unchangeability of Brahman or Bhagavat. The real position is therefore this that Brahman is unchangeable, but yet it somehow changes into the world. This is more in favour of the Theory of Unthinkable Difference-cum-Non-difference prapagated by Śrī Caitanya and of the Avikṛta-pariṇāma-vāda or the Theory of Transformation of the Unchangeable propagated by Vallabha.

4. The Pāñcatātra thinkers have accepted the world of our

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[*] In reality, the Theory of *Vivarta* is not clearly traceable to the works of Śaṅkara. For him, as for Bhartṛhari, the term '*vivarta*' means simply 'causation'—either through real transformation or through false appearance. But from the fact that Śaṅkara regards the world as a creation of indescribable māyā which does not share the nature of Brahman, the later thinkers developed the Theory of *Vivarta* in its full extent.

experience as real. From the discussions found in some *Saṁhitās*, however, it is known that the reality of the world has been accepted only from the vyāvahārika or empirical point of view. The *Jayākhya Saṁhita* says that all the objects of the world are but reflections of Brahman, and just as the reflection a thing does not actually exist in a mirror, so also the world does not really exist outside. It is furhter said that Brahman prevades all the objects of the world, but brahman is not influenced or affected by these objects, just as the latus-leaf is not wet by water. The *Nārada Pañcarātra* also says that Brahman is the only reality and that the world is totally false. According to the *Viṣṇu Saṁhitā* also, Brahman alone is real, and there is no multiplicity here. The world is described here as a reflection on Brahman, like the reflection of the moon in water.

Of course, these views of the Pāñcarātra philosophy are not to be identified with the theory of the falsity of the world found in Śaṅkara's Advaitism. For, according to Pāñcarātra, the creation or evolution of the world is real, and not false, while according to Advatism, as generally explained, the act of creation is itself false. The point is that, though in the Pāñcarātra or Vaiṣṇava Tantra as in the Śaiva and the Śākta Tantras, Brahman alone is declared to be real, the world has not been regarded as totally false. In their view, the world has really been manifested from Lakṣmī, the real power of Brahman, and hence, it cannot be false. The world declared to be false is the world manifested to the *jīvas* under ignorance, while the world in its essential nature is *brahma-maya* or of the nature of Brahman. The cardinal difference between Śaṅkara's Advaitism —as it is generally explained—and Pāñcarātra is this that, Śaṅkara establishes Advaitism by posting the world, while Pāñcarātra establisnes Advaitism by posting the world and identifying it with Brahman.

While discussing the question of the source of the world, the Pāñcarātra thinkers have raised the problem : How the qualified and impure world could be manifested from the unqualified and pure Brahman. Since Brahman is the only eternal and transcendental reality, the world must be regarded as manifested from the Brahman. And if this changing and impure world is said to be created from Brahman of unchaging and pure nature, then Brahman must be regarded as stepping down from its nature. Hence, the Pāñcarātra, while discussing the problem of the creation of the world, raises two questions : (1) Can we accept Brahman of unchanging nature as the only cause of this changing world, or not ? (2) If the unchanging and pure Brahman is said to be the only cause of the whorld, then does the pure and unchanging nature of Brahman in its act of creating the world, remain unaffected, or not ?

In solving these problems, the Pāñcarātra thinkers say that in reality, Parabrahman has no direct relation with the creation, sustenance etc. of the world. In their view, the difference between Brahman of transcendental, unchanging and pure nature and the world of empirical, changing and impure nature is so great that Parabrahman cannot be regarded as the direct caure of the world or as having a direct relation with it. Hence, to establish some relation between Brahman and the world or to explain the creation of the world from Brahman, the Pāñcarātra thinkers accept some interim stages between Brahman and the world. They say that, this world has been produced not directly from Parabrahman but from its Śakti or power called Lakṣmī. This Lakṣmī or power of Parabrahman performs the cosmic processes of creation etc. but by this act of herself, she never exerts any influence on the nature of Brahman. Hence, Brahman always exists in its unqualified and transcendental nature.[8] This trend of the Pāñcarātra thinkers to explain the world-process with the help of Śakti gave rise to the Theory of Vyūha which is a distinguishing mark of this system. Through this Theory of Vyūha, the Pāñcarātra thinkers try to establish that this empirical world has been created not directly by Parabrahman but by its Śakti. This creation by Śakti is also not through a direct process but through the Vyūhas. Hence, Parabrahman is not influenced by the process of cretion, sustenance and annihilation af the universe.

REFERENCES

[1. nirmala-darpaṇe yadvat kiñcid vastv-abhitiṣṭhati—asmiu māyā-maye visve vyāpī sarvesvavaḥ prabhuḥ, sarvadā viddhy-asaktasya yathāmbhaḥ puskara-cehade—JS, 4.85-6; brahmādi-stamba-paryantaṁ sarvaṁ mithyaiva narada—*NPR*, 2,2.100; darpaṇānāṁ baḥutve tu dṛsyantc naikadhā yathā tadvad bahutvaṁ manyante yiṣṇos tasyālpacetasāḥ. yathāmbhasīndu-bimbāni pratisabdas-ca naikadhā. eko 'pyātmā bahuṣv-evam ityāhus tattva-darsinah—*Viṣṇu-Saṁhitā*,

2. bhagavān nārāyaṇo devo bhāvo lakṣmīr ahaṁ parā. lakṣmī-uārāyaṇākhyātam ato brahma sanātanam—*LT*, 2. 15; tasya ca paramā raktiḥ...ahaṁ nārāyaṇī saktiḥ—*LT*, 2.11-12; īso nārāyaṇo jñeyaḥ isatā tasya eāpy-aham—*LT*, 3.14; mayā kṛtaṁ hi yat karma tena tat kṛtam ucyate—*LT*, 11.6.]

ON THE THEORIES OF VIVARTA OR APPEARANCE AND PARINAMA OR TRANSFORMATION

SECTION

10

ON THE THEORIES OF VIVARTA OR APPEARANCE AND PARINĀMA OR TRANSFORMATION

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views*

1. "In his *Vedānta-sūtra* Śrīla Vyāsadeva has described that everything is but a transformation of the energy of the Lord Śaṅkarācārya, however, has misled the world by commenting that Vyāsadeva was mistaken. Thus he has raised great opposition to theism throughout the entire world."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

2. "In his Śarīraka-bhāṣya, Śaṅkarācārya has introduced the statement 'vācārambhaṇaṁ vikāro nāmadheyam' from the *Chāndogya upaniṣad* to try to prove that acceptance of the transformation of the energy of the Supreme Lord is faulty......A person can create many things by the transformation of his energy. For example, a businessman transforms his energy by establishing many big factories or business organizations, yet he remains a person although his energy has been transformed into these many factories or business concerns. The Māyāvādī philosophers do not understand this simple fact. Their tiny brains and poor fund of knowledge cannot afford them sufficient enlightenment to realize that when a man's energy is transformed, the man himself is not transformed but remains the same person."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

3. "Not believing in the fact that the energy of the Absolute Truth is transformed, Śaṅkarācārya has propounded his theory of illusion. Śaṅkarācārya does not believe in the transformation of the energy of the Absolute Truth."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

4. "Śrīla Vyāsadeva has explained that the Absolute Truth is a person who has different potencies...After creation, he remains the same person ; He is not transformed into everything......In the *Vedānta-sūtra* it is said, 'sa-tattvato 'nyathā-buddhir vikāra ity-udāhṛtaḥ.' This *mantra* indicates that from one fact another fact is generated......This generation of a second, independent truth from a first truth is called *vikāra*, or transformation resulting in a by-product".—*CC*, 1.7 121.

5. "In the *Chāndogya upaniṣad* there is the following *mantra*: 'aited ātmyam idaṁ sarvam.' This *mantra* indicates without a doubt that the entire world is Brahman."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

6. "It is to be concluded that the entire cosmic manifestation is a transformation of the energy of the Supreme Lord, not of the Supreme Lord or Absolute Truth Himself, who always remains the same. The material world and the living entities are transformations of the energy of the Lord, the Absolute Truth or Brahman, who is the original source."—*CC*, 1.7.121.

7. "The *jīva*, or living entity, is a spiritual spark who is part of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unfortunately, he thinks the body to be the self and that misunderstanding is called *vivarta*, or acceptance of untruth to be truth. The body is not the self, but

animals and foolish people think that it is. *Vivarta* (illusion) does not, however, denote a change in the identity of the spirit soul ; it is the misconception that the body is the self that is an illusion."—*CC*, 1.7.123.

8. "Although touchstone produces many varieties of valuable jewels, it nevertheless remains the same. It does not chang its original form."—*CC*, 1.7.126.

9. "The touchstone, after touching iron, produces volumes of gold without being changed. Similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests Himself as the cosmic manifestation by His inconceivable potency, yet He remains unchange in His eternal, transcendental form."—*CC*, 1.6.171.

10. "Although the touchstone turns iron into gold many times, it remains in its original condition. If such a material stone can maintain its inconceivable energy after producing volumes of gold, certainly the Supreme Personality of Godhead can remain in His original sac-cid-ananda form after creating the cosmic world." —*CC*, 2.6.171.

11. "Janmādyasya yataḥ' does not suggest that the original person has been transformed. Rather it clearly indicates that He produces this cosmic manifestation through His inconceivable energy."—*CC*, 2.6.172.

12. "All of these *sūtras* indicate the transformation of the Lord's energy. It is not that the Lord undergoes direct transformation, which is called *pariṇāma-vāda.* However, being very anxious to protect Śrīla Vyāsadeva from criticism, Śaṅkarācārya became a pseudo gentle-

man and put forward his theory of illusion (*vivarta-vāda*). Śaṅkarācārya concocted this meaning of *pariṇāma-vāda*, and by word jugglery he endeavored very hard to establish *pariṇāma-vāda* as *vivarta-vāda*." —*CC*, 2.6.172.

13. "The example of misunderstanding a rope to be a snake is mentioned in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, but it is meant to explain the error of identifying the body with the soul......It is due to illusion (*vivarta-vāda*) that a human being, like an animal, identifies the body with the self. This is a proper example of *vivarta*, or illusion. The verse 'atattvato' 'nyathā-buddhir vivarta ity udāhṛtaḥ' describes such an illusion. To not know actual facts and thus to mistaken one thing for another (as, for example, to accept the body as oneself) is called *vivarta-vāda*. Every conditioned living entity who considers the body to be the soul is deluded by this *vivarta-vāda*."—*CC*, 1.7.122.

14. "The material energy, which is a preverted form of the spiritual energy, presents everything prevertedly, thus causing misconceptions and duality."—*CC*, 1.5.56.

B. *Our observations.*

1. Nowhere in the *Vedānta-sūtra* of Vyāsa the world has been described to be a transformation of the energy of the Absolute. Vyāsa has simply said that the world emanated from Brahman. In explaining this very position, the Vaiṣṇavas says that the world is a transformation of the energy of Brahman, while Śaṅkara holds that it is an appearance of Brahman. Śaṅkara has nowhere said that Vyāsa is

mistaken. Further, Śaṅkara's view is not opposed to theism

2-3. (a) Śaṅkara has nowhere referred to the energy of the Lord—either as real or as unreal. He has, of course, accepted māyā as a deluding power of Īśvara, but his Īśvara is not the Lord of the Vaiṣṇavas.

(b) The very assertion that 'when a man's energy is transformed, the man himself is not transformed' goes in favour of the theory of *vivarta*, according to which māyā is transformed into the world, and not Brahman.

4. (a) Not even a single *sūtra* can be cited from the *Vedānta-sūtra* to show that the Absolute is a person. Vyāsa has simply used the terms 'Brahman' or 'Ātman' to denote the Absolute. These terms may be taken to mean either the Personal Absolute or the Impersonal Absolute.

(b) It is a matter of shame that BV has quoted the passage 'sat-attvato......udāhṛtaḥ' more than once identifying it to be a '*mautra*' occurring in *Vedānta-sūtra*'. Actually, however, it is neither a *mantra*, nor does it occur in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

5-6. (a) If the entire world be Brahman, then can we not say that the perception of the world as 'non-conscious' and as 'distinct from Brahman' is an illusion ?

(b) According to Vaiṣṇavism, the world is a transformation not of Brahman but of the energy of

Brahman. Hence, the world should be described not as Brahman but as the energy of Brahman.

(c) In the view of the Vaiṣṇava-Vedāntins, the living entity is an 'eternal atom of consciousness'. How can it be a transformation ? If it be a transformation, it must be considered impermanent, and, as such, not the real self.

7. *Vivarta* is a theory of causality, according to which, a reality, itself remaining unchanged, seems to be producing or appearing as something else. Misunderstanding arises from this *vivarta* ; misunderstanding itself is not *vivarta*. That means, *vivarta* does not mean illusion ; illusion is the effect of *vivarta*. Hence, BV's interpretation of the term '*vivarta*' is purely his own.

8-10. In a like manner, the Advaitins hold that Brahman produces the world though in itself the former remains unchanged. This is the theory of *vivarta*.

11. The Advaitins also say that Brahman, remaining unchanged in its essence, creates the world through some inconceivable power. The Vaiṣṇavas consider this power real, though not eternal, while the Advaitins regard it as inexpressible in the sense that it is neither eternal like Brahman nor totally non-existent like a sky-flower.

12. (a) None of the *sūtras* of *Vedānta-sūtra* speaks of the transformation of the 'energy' of the Lord. *Sūtras* like 'paṭavac-ca' 'yathā ca prāṇādi' etc. say that it is Brahman that reveals itself as the world. Here there is no reference to any energy. And as the unchangeable Brahman cannot be transformed into

the world, Śaṅkara takes the help of theory of *vivarta*. We don't find any 'word-jugglery' in Śaṅkara's assertion.

(b) Here the expression 'pseudo gentleman' is extremely unbecoming.

13. (a) The example of rope-snake occurs not in the *Māṇḍūkya-upānisad*, but in the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*.

(b) See obs. 4 and 7 under this Section.

14. This material energy which, itself being perverted, presents everything pervertedly is what is called māyā in Advaita Vedānta.

ON SANKARA'S VIEWS ABOUT THE VYUHA-VADA

SECTION

11

ON ŚANKARA'S VIEWS ABOUT THE VYUHA-VĀDA

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Presentation and Criticism* (*Comt. on CC,* 1.5)

1. (a) "In commenting on the forty-second verse of the *Vedānta-sūtra,* Śrīpād Śaṅkarācārya has claimed that Śaṅkarṣaṇa is jīva, the ordinary living entity, but there is no evidence in any Vedic scripture that devotees of the Lord have ever said that Saṅkarṣaṇa is an ordinary living entity. He is an infallible plenary expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the Viṣṅu category, and He is beyond the creation of material nature. He is the original source of the living entities. The *Upaniṣads* declare, 'nityo nitykānāṁ catanaś cetanānām': "He is the supreme living entity among all the living entities". Therefore He is *vibhu-caitanya,* the greatest. He is directly the cause of the cosmic manifestation and the infinitesimal living beings. He is the infinite living entity, and ordinary living entities are infinitesimal."

(b) "Therefore these quadruple forms are never to be considered ordinary living beings. Each of Them is a plenary expansion of the Absolute Godhead, and thus each is identical with the Supreme Lord in knowledge, opulence, energy, influence, prowess and potencies."

(c) "If Saṅkarṣaṇa is understood to represent the living entities created from the body of Vāsudeva, the living entities would have to be noneternal."

2. "In reply to the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya on the forty-fourth verse, it may be said that no pure devotees strictly following the principles of Pāñcarātra will ever accept the statement that all the expansions of Viṣṇu are different identities, for this idea is completely false."

3. "Śrīpā Śaṅkarācārya has tried to prove that Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa Pradyumna and Aniruddha expand through cause and effect. He has compared Them with earth and earthen pots. That is completely ignorant, however, for there is no such thing as cause and effect in Their expansions (nānyad yat sad-asat-param)..."

4. "It is to be accepted that Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumma and Aniruddha are as good as Lord Vāsudeva, for they all have inconceivable power and can accept transcendental forms like Vāsudeva."

5. "Śaṅkarācārya says (verse 42): Another name of Vāsudeva is Paramātmā, another name of Saṅkarṣaṇa is *jīva* (the living entity), another name of Pradyumna is mind, and another name of Aniruddha is *ahaṁkāra* (false ego)...Therefore Śaṅkarācārya says that Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha must be creations of that original cause."

B. ***Our observations.***

1. (a) The references called 'verses' by BV in all the cases of this chapter are actually not verses; they are *sūtras* or aphorisma.

(b) Among the Vedic works, we find the theory of Vyūha only in the Gopalottara-tāpinī Upaniṣad and the Mudgala Upaniṣad, while in the Pāñcarātra literature, this theory is found in so many works, such as, *Lakṣmī-Tantra*, *Vihagendra-Saṁhitā*, *Nārāyaṇīya*-section of the *Mahābhārata* ('Śānti Parvan') and so on. It is true that in the Upaniṣads mentioned above, Saṅkarṣaṇa has not been identified as *'jīva'*, but in a number of places of the *Pāñcarātra* works. Saṅkarṣaṇa has been called *'jīva'*. In the *Nārāyaṇīya*, he has been called *'jīva'* more than once ('sa jīvaḥ parisaṁkhyātaḥ śeṣaḥ saṁkarṣaṇaḥ parbhuḥ', 'jīvaḥ saṁkarṣaṇaḥ prabhuḥ'—*Mahabhārata*, 'Śānti', 339,33.40). And Śaṅkara has simply recorded this Pāñcarātra tradition ; it is not a creation of his own. Of course, here *'jīva'* means not 'the ordinary living being', but the reservoir of all living beings'. Śaṅkara also has not equated Saṁkarṣaṇa with the ordinary living being.

(c) The passage 'nityo' nityānām' etc. (*Kaṭha*, 2.2.13) refers to Brahman ; it cannot refer to Saṅkarṣaṇa, for the simple reason that the very concept of Saṅkarṣaṇa is totally absent from the Upaniṣad referred to as also from the other principal *upaniṣads*.

2. Śaṅkara's view-point here is that the Vyūhas may be 'essentially' identical with the Supreme Person, but when we accept them as various manifestations, we cannot strictly say that they are 'completely' identical ; we must accept some sort of difference in the different manifestations.

3-5. In the Pāñcarātra literature itself, it is said that

Saṅkarṣaṇa was produced from Vāsudeva ; Pradyumna, from Saṅkarṣaṇa ; and Aniruddha, from Pradyumna ('utpanna eva bhavati—sa jīvaḥ parisaṁkhyātaḥ śeṣah saṅkarṣaṇaḥ prabhuḥ tasmāt—sa manaḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ pradumanaḥ paripaṣhyate, tasmāt prasūtaḥ—so'niruddhaḥ'—*Mahābhārata*, 'Śānti', 339.33-9). Śaṅkara has simply re-stated this cause- and-effect relation among the vyūhas as found in the scriptures ; he is not going to prove it. (See also 2 above).

***Note* :**

1. It is wrong to say that, Śaṅkara does not accept the Theory of Vyūha. He clearly submits that he has got nothing to say against the theory that Nārāyaṇa, the Absolute Self, manifests himself in many forms and exists separately. For he says that on the basis of the *Śruti*-passages like. 'He exists in one form, (he) exists in three forms', it is known that the Absolute manifests itself in many ways. Śaṅkara is going to criticise only those points which are incoherent with the general concept of spiritual science. (yat tāvat ucyeta yo' sau nārāyaṇah paraḥ—ātmanā ātmānam anekadhā vyūhya avasthita iti, tan na nirākriyate 'sa ekadhā bhavati tridhā bhavati' ityādi-śrutibhyaḥ pramātmanaḥ anekadhābhāvasya adhigatatvāt"—*BSŚB*, 2.2.42).

2. Vyūha-vāda or the Theory of Vyūha is a special feature of Pāñcarātra philosophy. This Vyūha-vāda in its primary form is found in the *Nārāyanīya* on the basis of which this theory has been detailed in the later *Saṁhitās.*

The Vyūha-vāda is practically connected with the theory of creation or evolution of the universe. Pāñcarātra accepts two parallel lines of euolution—one is the process of the evolution of the material world, which is found in detail in the Sāṁkhya school of philosophy ; the other is the evolution of the aspect of consciousness of the Absolute Reality. It is this theory of the evolution of consciousness that is called Vyūha-vāda.

According to the Nārāyaṇīya, Parabrahman or Puruṣottama first manifests himself as Vāsudeva. After that, Vāsudeva in conjunction with avyakta expresses himself as Saṅkarṣaṇa, the inner soul of all the *jīvas*. From Saṅkarṣaṇa manifests Pradyumna, the mind or internal sense-organ of all the *jīvas*, and from Pradyumna arises Aniruddha, the 'I'-sense (*ahaṁkāra* of all the jīvas.

[yo vāsudevo bhagavān kṣetrajño nirguṇātmakaḥ. jñeyaḥ sa eva rājendra jīvaḥ saṅkarṣaṇaḥ [prabhuḥ. saṅkarṣaṇāc ca pradyumno manobhūtaḥ sa ucyate. pradyumnād yo'niruddhas tu so 'haṁkāraḥ sa īśvaraḥ—*Nār.*]

ON THE QUESTION OF SRI KRSNA'S MATERIAL BODY

SECTION

12

ON THE QUESTION OF ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA'S MATERIAL BODY

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views.*

1. "Whenever He appears, He does so in the same original body, by His internal potency. In other words, Kṛṣṇa appears in this material world in His original form, with two hands, holding a flute. He appears exactly in His eternal body, uncontaminated by this material world. Although He appears in the same transcendental body and is Lord of the universe, it still appears that He takes His birth like an ordinary living entity." —*BG*, 4.6.

2. "Modern impersonalists are still less intelligent, for they do not even follow their great predecessor Śaṅkarācārya, who has specifically stated that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Impersonalists, therefore, not knowing the Supreme Truth, think Kṛṣṇa to be only the son of Devakī and Vāsudeva, or a prince, or a powerful living entity."—*BG*, 7.24.

3. "If Kṛṣṇa, the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, were māyā, material, as the impersonalists consider Him to be, then like the living entity He would change His body and forget everything about His past life."—*BG*, 7.26.

4. "Some of those who deride Kṛṣṇa and who are infected

with the Māyāvādī philosophy quote the following verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3,29,21) to prove that Kṛṣṇa is just an ordinary man, "Ahaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu bhūtātmāvasthitaḥ sadā." "The Supreme is present in every living entity."—*BG*, 9.11.

5. "The impersonalist philosophere, who wish to maintain that the Absolute Truth is without senses, cannot comprehend this verse of *Bhagavad-gītā.* To them, it is either a metaphor or proof of the mundane character of Kṛṣṇa."—*BG*, 9,26.

6. "A Māyāvādī is one who considers the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa to be made of Māyā and who also considers the abode of the Lord and the process of approaching Him, devotional service, to be Māyā."—*CC*, 1.7.33.

7. "They cannot understand that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is spiritual and therefore beyond the conception of material illusion, Whenever Kṛṣṇa incarnates personally or as a devotee, these Māyāvādī philosophers accept Him as an ordinary human being."—*CC*, 1.7.24-30.

8. "...they believe that Kṛṣṇa has a body made of material elements and that the activities of loving service to Kṛṣṇa are sentimentality. They are known as Māyāvādīs because according to their opinion Kṛṣṇa has a body which is made of māyā, and the loving service of the Lord executed by devotees is also māyā. They consider such devotional service to be an aspect of fruitive activities (*Karma-kāṇḍa*)."—*CC*, 1.7.101.

9. "One who thinks that there is a difference between

Lord Viṣṇu's body and His soul dwells in the darkest region of ignorance. There is no difference between Lord Viṣṇu's body and Viṣṇu's soul, for they are *advaya-jñāna*, one knowledge. In this world there is a difference between the material body and spiritual soul, but in the spiritual world everything is spiritual, and there are no such differences. The greatest offense of the Māyāvādī philosophers is to consider Lord Viṣṇu and the living entities to be one and the same." —*CC*, 1.7.115.

10. "This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-Gītā*. "Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all sentient beings, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form". (*Bg.* 4.6) *Ātma-māyā* refers to the spiritual potency. When Kṛṣṇa comes to this or any other universe, He does so with His spiritual potency."—*CC*, 1.7.119.

11. "It is an exercise in futility to take up the *Gīta* for discussion only in order to ostentatiously display one's erudition, and thus to foolishly misinterpret the text so much that one concludes that the speaker of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is a mere mortal." —*SOK*, P. 167.

12. "Scholars like Dr. Radhakrishnan should understand that within Lord Kṛṣṇa there is only Lord Kṛṣṇa and nothing else. Lord Kṛṣṇa's body and soul are the same. The *Gīta*'s conclusion is that the nondual truth is Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Supreme Being. But Dr. Radhakrishnan has somehow discovered another, second being within Kṛṣṇa."—*SOK*, P. 170.

B. *Our observations*

1. (a) Sankara recognises Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead ; his followers also do so. BV cannot cite any passage from the standard works of Advaita Vedānta, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supremacy has been denied or his position has been undermined. If some common people from the street undermine Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Advaitins are not to be blamed.

(b) Yes, when Kṛṣṇa was born, he was born as the son of Devakī and Vasudeva. Denial of this fact will mean the denial of the existence of the world of our experience.

2. (a) When the Lord is born as a man, he certainly assumes, like all other human beings, a body consisting of flesh and blood and having birth and death. If it is denied, we shall have to say that Kṛṣṇa's marriage, his giving birth to children, his participation in Kurukṣetra war—all these are but magical shows. This will amount to denying the charm of the Lord's birth as a human being and also the existence of the world of our experience.

(b) The expression '*sambhavāmi*' used in the *Gitā* means that the Lord is 'actually born' and 'born with a body of flesh and blood.'

(c) The assertion that 'Kṛṣṇa appears in his original, eternal and transcendental form' means that, 'not even for a single moment, he is swayed away from his essential nature.' In that sense, he is not subject to birth and death.

(d) The individual self is also free from birth and death. Hence, our conception of the birth and death of beings is completely wrong. The difference between Kṛṣṇa and other beings, however, is this that Kṛṣṇa does never forget his nature, while ordinary beings do.

3. (a) In the view of the impersonalists, it is the material body of Kṛṣṇa that is the product of māyā, and not Kṛṣṇa himself, nor his transcendental form.

(b) The materiality of the body of Kṛṣṇa having been denied by BV, Kṛṣṇa's body may be regarded by him as a product of magical feats, but not by the Impersonalists who accept the reality of the empirical world, though they deny the same from the transcendental point of view.

(c) Yes, Kṛṣṇa changes his body in different births. He himself says, 'I am born in different epochs', 'My numerous births have passed, ("sambhavāmi yuge yuge", "bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni"—*BG*, 4.8.5).

(d) Kṛṣṇa does not forget the events of his previous births, since he does not forget his essential nature. Among the spiritually advanced aspirants also there are many who remember the events of their previous births.

4. A so-called Advaitin or an ordinary person of the street might have made such an assertion, but no real Advaitin can do so. And, practically, not even a single word can be cited from the standard works of Advaita Vedānta in favour of this

assertion. There are hundreds and thousands of passages in the *Upaniṣads* and other scriptures which declare that the Supreme is present in every entity. No Advaitin has ever tried to prove Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary man on that ground.

5. (a) This remark has been made by BV, while explaining the verse 'patraṁ puṣpam……aśnāmi' of the *BG*. Here we are to say that the Lord certainly does not accept leaves, flowers etc. offered by the devotees with his hands. He accepts these offerings spiritually —by his whole existence and not necessarily by extending his hands. To say that the Lord takes smell by His nose only and receives eatables by His hands and mouth only is to equate the Lord with empirical beings and to accept the mundane character of Kṛṣṇa.

(b) The Advaitins also offer leaves fruits flowers etc. to Brahman and hold that Brahman receives all the things offered to it. Hence, for the Advaitins, this is neither a metaphor nor a proof of Kṛṣṇa's mundane nature.

6. For an Advaitin, neither the transcendental body of Kṛṣṇa nor his transcendental abode is an effect of māyā. Devotional services and other practices followed in this empirical life are certainly due to māyā, but those performed in the transcendental sphere are not. (See Note, Section-5.)

7. (a) The Advaitins do accept the spiritual body of the Lord (See Note, Section-1).

(b) But when the Lord takes birth as a human being, he certainly owns a body of flesh and blood.

8. (a) The devotional activities might be regarded as marks of sentimentality by some ordinary people, but not by the real Advaitins. In the standard works of Advaita Vedānta, devotional activities have never been criticised in this way. In reality, Śaṅkara himself has accepted devotion as a means for the realisation of the Supreme. (See Note, Section-5).

(b) BV cannot cite even a single line from the works of Advaita Vedānta to prove that, according to the Advaitins, devotional service is a kind of fruitive activity.

9. Overlooking BV's remarks, we may simply say : (a) In the transcendental plane Kṛṣṇa's body and soul are identical. (b) If we accept the theory of *avatāra*, we must accept the reality of Kṛṣṇa's material body as distinct from his spiritual body. (c) If we strictly follow the Vaiṣṇava line of thought, the relation between the Lord and his material body will have to be regarded as one of difference-cum-non-difference.

10. *Ātma māyā* by which the Lord is born certainly means spiritual potency ; otherwise the birth of the Lord would have been just like that of an ordinary being bereft of the knowledge of the real nature. This concept of *ātma-māyā* does not indicate that the material body of the Lord is a figment of imagination.

11. **The material body of Kṛṣṇa born as a human being is certainly subject to death.**

12. **From the above discussions, it will be clear that S. Radhakrishnan is right in distinguishing the spiritual body of Kṛṣṇa, the *avatārin* or the original source of the *avatāras*, from the material body of Kṛṣṇa, the *avatāra* or incarnation.**

Notes :

(a) Throughout the discussion on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body, BV is seen to be confusing between the *prākṛta* or empirical form and the *aprākṛta* or transcendental form of the Lord. In the *aprākṛta* form of the Lord, there is no distinction between the body and the self, while in his *prākṛta* form, there is distinction between the body and the self. Thus, Kṛṣṇa's *prākṛta* body born to Vasudeva and Devakī during the time of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas was certainly made of the five material elements and consisting of flesh, blood, bone etc. ; it grew day by day and at a certain time it was destroyed. To deny such a position is to go against the law or nature of the world.

(b) If the materiality of the body of Kṛṣṇa is denied, this principle will have to be extended to the case of all other incarnations also, like Rāma, Balarāma, Paraśurāma and to Ramakrishna of to day. In that case, the fact of incarnation and all the events relating to it will have to be regarded as acts of magical feats, which is totally unacceptable.

(c) The fact that Kṛṣṇa owns a *prākṛta* body for the purpose of *prākṛta-līlā* or worldly pastimes does not go against his Supremacy. The point is simply this that, though Kṛṣṇa owns a material body, he is not subjugated by it like other human beings.

(d) It may be noted with great pain that while criticising S. Radhakrishnan's view in this connection, BV has shown such an attitude or gesture and has used such words (e.g. 'so-called greatest philosopher', 'though born in Brahmin family of firm adherence' and so on) that can summarily be described as 'unparliamentary'.

ON THE CONCEPT OF MAHAVAKYA

SECTION

13

ON THE CONCEPT OF MAHĀVĀKYA

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views*

1. "The Vedic sound vibration *oṁkāra*, the principal word in the Vedic literatures, is the basis of all Vedic vibrations. Therefore one should accept *oṁkāra* as the sound representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the reservoir of the cosmic manifestation..."—CC, 1.7.128.

2. "*Oṁkāra* is the basic principle of all Vedic *mantras*, for it is a representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa, understanding of whom is the ultimate goal of the *Vedas*. Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand these simple facts explained in *Bhagavad-gīta*, and yet they are very proud of being Vedāntīs."—CC, 1.7.128.

3. "The Māyāvādī philosophers consider many Vedic *mantras* to be the *mahā-vākya*, or principal Vedic *mantra*, such as 'tattvamasi' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7), 'idaṁ sarvaṁ yad ayam ātmā' and 'brahmedam sarvam' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.5.1) 'ātmaivedaṁ sarvam' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7.25.2) and 'neha nānāsti kiñcana' (*Kaṭha Upanisad*, 2.1,11). That is a great mistake. Only *oṁkāra* is the *mahā-vākya*. All these other *mantras* which the Māyāvādīs accept as the *mahā-vākya* are only incidental. They cannot be taken as the *mahā-vākya*, or *manā-mantra*."*CC*, 1.7.128.

4. "The Māyāvādī philosophers stress the statements 'tat tvam asi', 'so' ham', etc., but they do not stress the real *mahā-mantra, praṇava* (*oṁkāra*). Therefore because they misrepresent Vedic knowledge, they are the greatest offenders to the lotus feet of the Lord." —*CC*, 1.7.130.

B. *Our observations.*

1-2. In pursuance of the Upaniṣads, Śaṅkara has accepted Auṁkāra as representing both the Higher Brahman and the Lower Brahman—the Impersonal Absolute and the Personal Absolute. And, to be frank, Śaṅkara has given emphasis on Auṁkāra more than the Vaiṣṇavas. It is therefore meaningless to criticise the Advaitins as the opponents of Auṁkāra and to pass a slander.

3. (a) Vedic passages like 'tat-tvam-asi' etc. have been declared as *mahāvākyas* in the *Upaniṣads* themselvs. The *Śukarahasya Up.* says ; "*Mahāvākyas* are four in number ; they are : "prajñānaṁ Brahma. 'ahaṁ brahmāsmi', 'tat-tvam-asi' and 'ayam-ātmā brahma.'' *Nirālamba Up.* refers to passages like 'sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma' 'neha nānāsti kiñcana' etc. also as *mahāvākyas.* Hence, Śaṅkara is not to be blamed for accepting these passage as *mahāvākyas*.

(b) Of course, Auṁkāra, being the sound-representation of the Absolute, may be regarded as *mahāvākya,* though none before Śrī Caitanya has identified it as such.

4. The Advaitins have certainly given proper emphasis on Auṁkāra. Śaṅkara himself has eulogised Auṁkāra at numerous places in his commentaries on the *Upaniṣads* and the *BG* (*vide* comts. on *Tait. Upaniṣad*, 1.8, *Ch. upaniṣad*, 1.1.1, *Praśna upaniṣad*, 5.2, *Māṇḍūkya upaniṣad*, 1, Māṇḍūkya Kārikā 1.26-7, *BG*, 8.13 and so on). Hence, there is no ground to hold that the Advaitins misrepresent Vedic knowledge.

ON SAMKHYA, YOGA, MIMANSA AND CARVAKISM

SECTION

14

ON SĀMKHYA, YAGA, MĪMĀNSĀ AND CĀRVĀKISM

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views*

1. "The goal of life is to know Kṛṣṇa, who is situated within the heart of every living being as Paramātmā, the four-handed Viṣṇu form. The *yoga* process is practiced in order to discover and see this localized form of Viṣṇu, and not for any other purpose. The localized Viṣṇu-*murti* is the plenary representation of Kṛṣṇa dwelling within one's heart. One who has no program to realize this Viṣṇu-*murti* is uselessly engaged in mock *yoga* practice and is certainly wasting his time."—*BG*, 6.14.

2. "And after this, one becomes situated in trance, or *samādhi*, which means that the *yogi* realizes the Supersoul through transcendental mind and intelligence, without any of the misgivings of identifying the self with the Superself."—*BG*, 6.23

3. "If one leaves the body at the time designated above, either accidentally or by arrangement, it is possible for him to attain the impersonal *brahmajyoti.* Mystics who are advanced in *yoga* practice can arrange the time and place to leave the body. Others have no control —if by accident they leave at an auspicious moment, then they will not return to the cycle of birth and death, but otherwise there is every possibility that they will have to return."—*BG*, 8.24.

4. "The paths of the culture of knowledge (jñāna-mārga) and of mystic powers (*yogamārga*) are equally hazardous, for one does not know where he will go by following these uncertain methods."—*CC*, 1.1.91.

5. "Those who are fond of mental speculation (*jñāna-mārga*) or want to meditate in mystic *yoga* to find the Absolute Truth must approach the impersonal effulgenece of the Lord and His partial representation respective. Such persons cannot realize the eternal form of the Lord."—*CC*, 1.2.26.

6. "Material nature has two different phases. The aspect called *pradhāna* supplies the material ingredients for cosmic development, and the aspect called *māyā* causes the manifestation of her ingredients, which are temporary like form in the ocean."—*CC*, 1.5.51.

7. "The followers of the Patañjali *yoga* system actually want to merge into the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This indicates that they do not want to engage in His service despite their knowledge of Him, and thus their position is even more abominable than that of those who want to merge into the Lord's effulgence. These *yogis* meditate on the four-handed Viṣṇu form of the Lord in order to merge into His body."—*CC*, 2.6.269.

8. "They (the followers of Patañjali) believe that when one becomes perfect, he cannot remain a person. This *yoga* system is therefore abominable because its final conception is impersonal. In the beginning, these *yogis* accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but they ultimately give up this idea in order to become impersonal. They are most unfortunate because although they have a personal conception of the Absolute Truth,

they neglect to rendr devotional service to the Lord and thus they fall down again into the material world." —*CC*, 2.6.269.

9. "Nor can the *yogīs* be desireless, for they desire *yogic* perfections in order to exhibit some magical feats and gain popularity, people gather around those *yogīs*, and the *yogīs* desire more and more adulation."—*CC*, 2.19.149.

10 "Empirical, atheistic philosophers like Kapila spent innumerable tedious hours researching the material phenomena of this cosmic creation. Yet it remained beyond the grasp of their limited inteligence to understand that there exists a realm 'transcendental and far superior to this manifested material world."—*SOK*, p. 92.

11. "The other conclusion, of course, is that this cosmic manifestation is caused by an inexplicable unmanifested void. This argument is meaningless, the second is supported by the atheistic philosophical system of the Sāṁkhya *smṛti*, which directly opposes the Vedāntic philosophical conclusion."—*CC*, 2.6.15.

12. "The atheist Kapila does not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He says that the living entity is himself the Supreme Lord and that no one is greater than him. His conceptions of so-called conditional and liberated life are materialistic, and he refues to accept the importance of immortal time."—*CC*, 1.6.15.

13. "The Mīmāṁsaka philosophers, following the principles of Jaimini, stress fruitive activity and say that if there is a God, He must be under the laws of fruitive activity, in other words, if one performs his duties

very nicely in the material world, God is obliged to give one the desired result. According to these philosophers, there is no need to become a devotee of God. If one strictly follows moral principles, one will be recognized by the Lord, who will give the desired reward. Such philosophers do not accept the Vedic principle of *bhakti-yoga*. Instead, they give stress to following one's prescribed duty."—*CC*, 2.25.56.

14. "Cārvāka Muni, however, says, "It you have no money, then beg, borrow or steal, but in some way secure ghee and enjoy life." For one who further objects that he will be held accountable for such unauthorized activities as begging, borrowing and stealing, Cārvāka Muni replies, "You will not be held responsible. As soon as your body is burned to ashes after death, everything is finished."—*CC*, 1.7.119.

B. *Our observations.*

1. (a) The aim of *yoga* is to realise the identity between the *puruṣa* or individual self and Paramātman or the Highest Self residing at *sahasrāra* lying at the top of the spinal chord ("saṁyogo yoga ity-ukto jīvātmaparamātmanoḥ"—Yogi-yājñavalkha). Neither in the *Yoga-Upaniṣads* nor in the other scriptures or treatises on *yoga* there is any advice to meditate upon or realise the four-handed Viṣṇu. In Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra* there is a *sūtra* which ordains devotional mediation of Īśvara ('īśvara-praṇidhānāt'), but this Īśvara is not necessarily the four-handed Viṣṇu; it may be any form of the Lord. Moreover, here the aim set forth before the aspirant is the realisation of the real nature of the self, and

not that of Isvara. Lord Viṣṇu has, of course, been set forth as an object of meditation and realisation in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (2.2.10-13), but this has not been accepted as a common principle of *yoga.*

(b) The aim of *yoga* is to realise the oneness or identity between the self and Paramātman, the formless form of the Absolute ("samādhiḥ samatāvasthā jīvātma-paramātmanoḥ"—*Yoga-tattva-upaniṣad,* 107). The final state in the progress of the spiritual life of an aspirant has been described in the *Haṭhayoga-pradīpika* (4.56) as both full (*pūrṇa*) and inexpressible (*śūnya*) This is certainly the state of the realisation of the formless, differenceless and non-dual Brahman of the *upaniṣads* ('para-brahmaṇi līnaṁ tat paraṁ brahmaiva jāyate"—*Yoga-kundalī-upaniṣad,* 3.24 ; "ahaṁ brahmeti vādvaitaṁ samādhis tena jāyate"—*Gheraṇḍa-Saṁhitā,* Ch. 7). Thus, the aim of *yoga* being quite in harmony with the *upaniṣadic* philosophy, the *yogic* practices cannot be described as 'mock *yogic* practice'.

2. *Samādhi* is certainly a state of identity between the self and Paramātman or Brahman, as is clear from the passages quoted above (*Yogatattva-upaniṣad,* 107 ; *Yoga-kuṇḍalī upaniṣad.* 3.24 ; *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā,* Ch. 7).

3. BV thinks that attainment of liberation by most of the *yogins* is a matter of chance or accident. This is nothing but denying the Theory of Karman, according to which the future of a person is determined by the acts of that person. A person cannot

die accidentally; the time and place of his death are regulated by his own acts.

4. The paths of knowledge (*jñāna*) and *yoga* cannot be regarded as hazardous and uncertain methods, as these paths have been prescribed by hundreds of scriptures including the *upaniṣads* (See Note 2 at the bottom of this Section).

5. Spiritual aspirants attain the Absolute in consonance with the path they have chosen. Hence, it is natural that the devotees will attain the Absolute in its personal form, and the *jñānins* and the *yogins* will realise it as formleess Brahman and Paramātman, respectively.

6. It is because of this temporary nature of the worldly objects that they are called *'mithyā'* or false by the Advaitins.

7. The followers of Patañjali-yoga want to merge into Paramātman, the formless form of the Absolute residing at the top of the spinal chord, and not into the body of the Supreme Personality.] Of course, on the basis of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (see obs. 1 above), we may think that there might be some yogists who want to merge into the body of the Absolute. This might be abominable for BV, but not for an impartial thinker. In *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* also this kind of realisation called Īśvara-*sāyujya* has been described simply as lower than the devotional service to the Lord, but not as abominable as BV thinks (See *CC*, 2.6).

1. (a) This idea of becoming one with the Impersonal Brahman means Brahma-*sāyujya* or merging into

the existence of the formless Brahman. Our views on this form of liberation have been expressed under obs. 14, Section-4.

(b) The Lord is not a sentimental man like us that he would punish some persons simply because they does not offer their devotional services to Him. In pursuance of the Law of Karman, we may hold that a person is sure to get the fruits of his spiritual endeavour—either in the form of *jñāna* or in the form of *yoga*—even without his devotional services to the Personal Absolute. Further, longing for the Impersonal form of the Absolute is also a kind of devotion to the Impersonal Absolute which is essentially non-different from the Personal Absolute.

(c) The assertion of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa might be applicable to a person who really neglects or disregards to the Supreme Person, for this neglect or disregard the Supreme Person is an evil action, which is sure to bear its evil fruits. We must, however, add that a person neglecting or disregarding the impersonal Absolute also will get the evil result of this disregard, since it is also an evil act. Actually, however, the assertion of the *Bhāgavata* is not to be taken in its direct sense, for greater emphasis has been laid here on devotion simply for alluring people to this path.

9. Real *yogins* do never intend to gain popularity by exhibiting magical feats. Such an intention might be maintained by the *yoga-bhraṣṭas* or those who have gone astray from the path of *yoga*, and not by the real *yogins*. Such kind of downfall might come in the life of any spiritual aspirant, and the *yogins* alone should not be criticised for that.

10. Kapila spoken of in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* as the son of Devahūti is a theist, as accepted by BV also. Hence, Kapila described here as an atheist refers to the author of of *Sāṁkhya-sūtra*. We have elsewhere dealt with this issue in detail. The substance of that discussion is this : (a) No follower of any philosophical school of India ever goes against the fundamental thesis of that school. Accordingly, Kapila cannot be said to be going against the theistic conception of his predecessors, which forms the vital point of the Early Sāṁkhya philosophy. (b) Kapila's rejection of Īśvara or God is a rejection simply from the logical point of view, since the existence of God cannot be established by logical procedure. That is why Kapila says that 'Īśvara cannot be established,' and not that 'Īśvara is without any existence', (c) The aim of Kapila is not to establish the existence or non-existence of the transcendental realities but to explain the origin of the material world. And for this, the acceptance of the existence of God is not essential, as the acceptance of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is enough to explain the problem.

11. (a) Sāṁkhya cannot be called an atheistic system of philosophy (See 10 above).

(b) Sāṁkhya philosophy derives the material world form *prakṛti*—a subtle non-conscious entity—which is called material energy in Vaiṣṇavism and tantra. (See *Thoughts on Tantra and Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 207). Hence it is wrong to say that, according to this system, the world has come from an 'inexplicable unmanifested void'.

(c) Sāṁkhya does not oppose the philosophical conclusion of Vedānta, rather it presents us a theory

—the theory of the creation of the world from *prakṛti*—which is common to all the schools of Vedānta and Tantra. (See 'The Sāṁkhya Concept of the Puruṣa and Prakṛti', *Reflexions on Indian* philosophy, p. 148).

12. (a) Kapila has never said that the living entity is itself the Supreme Lord or that no one is greater than it. Kapila simply says that the aim of the aspirant is to realise the nature of the *puruṣa* or self as distinct from *prakṛti*, the non-conscious entity.

(b) It is not clear why BV regards the Sāṁkhya conception liberation as materialistic. Liberation in this system means the realisation of the self which is of the nature of *cit* or consciousness. The concept of *cit*, on its part, brings with it the concept of *ānanda* or bliss. (See 'The Problem of Bliss and consciousness in the Self', *Reflexions on Iudian philosophy*, P. 182). Accordingly, the Sāṁkhya concept of liberation can in no way be called materialistc.

13. (a) God has never been regarded by the Mīmāṅsakas as subjected to the Law of Karman. The Law of Karman is but a manifestation of the will of God and is therefore included in His being. (See 'The Law of Karman', *Reflexions on Indian Philosophy*, P. 69.). It is by this Law of Karman that God guides the world of self and matter.

(b) It is not correct to say that the Mīmāṅsakas do not accept the principle of *bhakti* or devotion. Āpadeva and Langākṣi Bhāskara have clearly accepted *bhakti* as a means for liberation ("īśvarārpaṇa-buddhyā kriyamāṇas tu niḥśreyasa-hetuḥ"—*Arthasaṁgraha* ;

"śrīgovindārpaṇa-buddhyā kriyamāṇas tu niḥsreyasa-hetuḥ"—Mīmāṅsā-nyāya-prakāśa).

14. Cārvāka has never advised his followers to beg or steal ; he has simply advised them to take *ghee* or clarified butter even through borrowing, if necessary. And borrowing is certainly not something immoral or criminal. The ideal set forth by Cārvāka is the proper maintenance of society, as against the philosophy of renunciation or ascetism which is opposed to the smooth running of the society. This ideal is certainly opposed to spiritualism, but for that the philosophy as a whole should not be misinterpreted and mocked at, as done by BV.

Note :

1. The philosophy of Sāṁkhya has been represented by many as atheistic and anti-Vedic. Actually, it is not true. Sāṁkhya has two phases—early and classical. Early Sāṁkhya represented by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the *Mahābharata* etc. clearly accepts the existence of God. The classical Sāṁkhya found in the Sāṁkhya-kārika is silent about God, while some *sūtras* of the Sāṁkhya-sūtra seem to reject the concept of God. Some commentators on *Sāṁkhya.kārikā* and *Sāṁkhya-sūtra* also have put forward some anti-theistic arguments. But Vijñānabhikṣu and some other thinkers hold that the purport of the rejection of Īśvara found in the *Sāṁkhya-sūtra* is simply this that, the existence of Īśvara cannot be established by logical procedure. The Vedic tradition also says that Īśvara is only to be realised and that his existence cannot be established by logic. Vijñāna-bhikṣu, and some others, therefore, conclude that Sāṁkhya is definitely theistic. We have supported this view in the work *Reflexions on Indian Philosophy*. The arguments we have put forward in that work are as follows :

First, Sāṁkhya is one of the oldest schools of Indian philosophy. The followers of this system are proud of the Vedic origin of their system. The *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* also describe the Sāṁkhya philosophy as the most authoritative system following the Vedic tradition. The Vedic philosophy, on its part, cannot be thought of without the acceptance of Īśvara. Accordingly, it can hardly imagined that the Sāṁkhya philosophy, which so keenly boasts of the Vedic tradition, should do away with the concept of Īśvara. Secondly, all the philosophical systems of India have a historical legacy; their main tenets run through generation to generation. It is also notable in this connection that reverence to the earlier thinkers is a characteristic of Indian thought. The later thinkers may try to interpret the doctrines of their predecessors in some different way, but they do never demolish them forthwith. And, as the Early or Epic Sāṁkhya is clearly theistic, it is very difficult to think that the Classical Sāṁkhya should raise protest against theism. That is to say, the Classical Sāṁkhya, being a continuation of the Early Sāṁkhya, should be explained in such a way that the main tenets of the latter are not contradicted. Thus, form a historical point of view, Bhikṣu's theistic interpretation of Sāṁkhya seems to be the best one. It is also to be accepted that Īśvara is really beyond any proof; he is only to be realised through spirttual practices. Śaṅkarācarya, too, in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad* says, "The Absolute cannot be proved by perception, as it is not an object there of. Neither can it be proved by inference." The denial of Īśvara in *Sāṁkhya-sūtra* may, therefore, very well be interpreted as one only from the logical point of view.

2. *Yoga* has been criticised by BV as a wrong path leading the spiritualists to a partial knowledge of the Absolute. This is completely a wrong contention.

(i) *Yoga* has been declared by the *upaniṣads*, the *Smṛtis*. the *Madābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to be a path leading the aspirants to liberation or to the realisation of the Absolute.

(ii) A study of the scriptures and treatises relating to *yoga* and also the life-histories of spiritualists pursuing the path of *yoga* shows how deep this path is and how deep realisation accrues in the state of *samādhi* attained by *yogic* practices. Hence, it is sheer folly to undermine the greatness of this path of *yoga*.

(iii) In reality, *yoga* is a common path for all the religious systems of India. including Buddhism and Jainism, for the practices of the eight limbs of *yoga* are to be found in all these systems. In Vaiṣṇavism also, yogic practices are treated as essential for the acquisition of spiritual enlightenment. In a number of places of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *yoga* has been highly eulogised as a path for spiritual uplift. The *Caitanya-caritāmrta* also refers to the need of these yogic practices. Let us quote a few passages in support of our view :

(a) "tat-kāraṇaṁ sāṁkhya-yogābhipannaṁ jnātvā devaṁ mucyate sarva-pāśaiḥ" (*Śvet. up* 6.13)—"Knowing that cause to be known by knowledge and yoga, one is freed from all bonds."

(b) "yat sāṁkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ tad yogair-api gamyate" (*BG*, 5.5)—"The position attainable by the followers of knowledge can be attained by the followers of *yoga* also."

(c) "śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ" (*Br. up.*, 2.4.5)—"One should read and understand the *Vedas*, should think over those truths that have been known from such studies, and should meditate upon those truths known from such studies and thoughts."

(d) "samādhiḥ samatāvasthā jīvātma-paramātmanoḥ" (*yogatattva up.*, 107)—"Samādhi means identity between the self and the Absolute."

(e) "paramātmani līnaṁ tat paraṁ brahmaiva jāyate", (*yogakuṇḍalī up.*, 3.24)—"The self merged in the Supreme self becomes Brahman itself."

(f) "aikyaṁ jīvātmanor āhur yogaṁ yoga-viśaradāḥ (*Devi Bhāgavata*)—"Indentity between the self and the Absolute is called *yoga* by the knowers of *yoga*."

(g) "ānandamayaḥ saṁ bhūtvā aikyaṁ brahmaṇi sambhavet" (*Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā*)—"The *jīva*, being of the nature of bliss, attains oneness with Brahman."

(h) "tapasā brahmacaryeṇa—sādhayet" (*Subāla up*, 3) —that (Absolute) is to be attained by penance, sex-control.

(i) śānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā ātmanyeva ātmānaṁ paśyati" (*Subāla up.*, 9)—"One who is calm, restrained, unattached, enduring and concentrated sees the Self within the self."

(j) "yoga ādhyātmikaḥ puṁsāṁ mato niḥśreyasāya me" (*Bhāgavata*, 3.25.13)—"In my view, *yoga* is the spiritual path for the attainment of liberation."

(k) "yamādibhir—ātmānaṁ pratipadyate" (*ibid*, 3.27.6) —"The self is to be attained by the practices of self-control etc."

(l) "tapoyuktena yogena" (*ibid*, 3.27.22)—"(Reality can be known) by *yoga* conjoined the penance."

(m) "bhakti-yogaś ca yogaś ca—ekatareṇaiva puruṣaḥ puruṣaṁ varjet" (*ibid*, 3.29.35)—"By any one between devotion and *yoga*, one attains the Supreme Person."

(n) "yogena vividhāṅgena—bhagavān īyate" (*ibid*, 3.32-35-36)="God is attained by *yoga* having different limbs."

(o) "jñāna-yoga-mārge tāre bhaje jei sab. brahma-ātmā-rūpe tāre kare anubhab", (*CC*, 1.2)—"Those who endeavour to attain the Lord through the paths of *jñāna* and *yoga*, realise him as Brahman and Self."

(p) "sei kṛṣṇa-prāpti- hetu bibidha sādhan, jñāna yoga bhakti tiner pṛthak lakṣaṇ." (*CC*, 2, 24)—"There are different ways for the attainment of Kṛṣṇa. *Jñāma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*—these three paths have different characteristics."

ON THF CONCEPTS OF THE GODS— SIVA, DURGA, KALI AND OTHERS

SECTION

15

ON THE CONCEPTS OF THE GODS—ŚIVA, DURGA, KĀLI AND OTHERS

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views.*

1. "Thus only those whose knowledge has been bewildered consider Lord Viṣṇu to be a demigod and therefore suggest that one may either worship Lord Viṣṇu, the goddess Kālī or Durgā or whomever he likes and achieve the same result. This is an ignorant conclusion that is not accepted in *Bhagavad-gītā,* which distinctly says, "yānti deva-vratā devān……yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām."—The worshipers of the demigods will be promoted to the respective planets of the demigods, but devotees of the Supreme Lord will go back home, back to Godhead."—*CC*, 1.7.115.

2. "The *durga-śakti* (material energy) acts under the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the universal creation, maintenance and destruction are being carried out by the *durga-śakti.* Kṛṣṇa's direction is in the background."—*CC*, 2.6.171.

3. "The who are interested in material promotion engage in ritualistic religious ceremonies and economic development to develop sense gratification. They ultimately attempt to merge into the impersonal existence of the Lord. Such people generally become impersonalists. They are interested in worshiping Lord

Śiva or goddess Durgā, but their return is one hundred percent materialistic."—*CC*, 2.8.90.

4. "Following the example of the *gopīs* the devotees sometimes worship the goddess Kātyāyanī, but they understand that Kātyāyanī is an incarnation of *yogamāyā*, The *gopīs* worshiped Kātyāyanī, *yogamāyā*, to attain *Kṛṣṇa* for their husband. On other hand, it is stated in the *Sapta-śatī* scripture that a *kṣatriya* king named Suratha and a rich *vaiśya* named Samādhi worshiped material nature in the form of goddess Durgā to attain material perfection. If one tries to mingle the worship of *yogamāyā* with *mahāmāyā*, considering them one and the same, he does not really show very high intelligence. The idea that everything is one is a kind of foolishness indulged in by those with less brain substance. Fools and rascals say that the worship of *yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā* is the same. This conclusion is simply the result of mental speculation, and it has no practical effect,"—*CC*, 2.8.90.

B. *Our observations.*

1. (a) Viṣṇu has never been described by the Advaitins as a demi-god or a god having partly human nature ; he is always accepted as the Personal Absolute. (b) Śiva and Kālī are also not ordinary gods like Indra, Vāyu and others, Śiva, like Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, is a from of the Personal Absolute, and Kālī, is the female counterpart or the motherly form of the same Absolute. (c) Durgā is also a form of the motherly aspect of the Supreme. Hence, the passage of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* ,'yānti deva-vratā devān' does not apply to the cases of Śiva, Kālī and Durgā.

2. (a) Durgā is the spiritual energy of the Lord, who looks after the world-process of creation, maintenance etc.; she is never the material energy. Material energy is called *prakṛti* or *māyā* which forms the *upādāna* or material of the material world; it is a lower manifestation of the spiritual energy.

(b) Durgā may be said to be working under the direction of the Lord—either in the form of Śiva or in the form of Kṛṣṇa; it should not be categorically said that she is working under the direction of Kṛṣṇa and not of Śiva.

3. (a) It is completely wrong to hold that persons interested in material promotion or sense-gratification become impersonalists and attempt to merge into the impersonal Brahman. The impersonalists or the Advaitins are extremely against material promotion and sense-gratification. That is why all the works of Advaitic discipline prescribe strong austerity and renunciation for the spiritual aspirants. The worship of Śiva and Durgā is also not necessarily prompted by materialistic desire; for Śva, Kālī and Durgā also, like Srī Kṛṣṇa, can grant liberation. Let us quote a few passages:

(I) **"samasta—sukha-nirvāṇa-karatvāt śaṅkaraḥ" (*Pañcārtha-Bhāṣya, Pāśupata-sūtra*, 2.20)—"Śaṅkara is called so, as he grants all kinds of bliss and liberation."**

(2) "labhate rudra-sāyujyam" (***Pāśupata-sūtra*, 5.33**) **—"The aspirant attains oneness with Rudra."**

(3) "sākṣāt rudreṇa saha sāyujyam" (*Pañcārtha-Bhāṣya* on *ibid*)—"Oneness with Rudra himself."

(4) "bhoga-mokṣa-siddhaye śivaḥ...śaktaḥ" (*Vṛtti* on *Tattva-prakāśa*)—"Śiva is able to grant worldly enjoyment and liberation."!

(5) "mokṣa-lakṣmīṁ prakāśayati" (*Śrīkaṇṭha-bhāṣya* on *BS*, 2.1.25)—"Śiva manifests the wealth of liberation."

(6) "sā vidyā paramā mukter hetu-bhūtā" (*Caṇḍī*, 1.37)—"She, the highest knowledge, is the cause of liberation."

(b) If some person hankers after material promotion or sense-gratification, he may worship Kṛṣṇa also for the fulfilment of the same.

4. (a) It is completely wrong to hold that Suratha and Vaiśya worshipped Durgā for material perfection. The characters of the Caṇḍī are but symbols of different events of the path of spiritual progress. (See *Sādhan Samar* by Brahmarsi Satyadev.)

(b) Yogamāyā and Mahāmāyā are certainly not identical: Yogamāyā acts only in the spiritual world; it helps Kṛṣṇa in displaying his divine sports, but is not concerned with the activities of the material world performed by other manifestations of the Lord. Mahāmāyā or Durgā, on the other hand, is the source of all energies—spiritual and material—of the Lord. The *Vaiṣṇava Tantras* identify Mahāmāyā or Durgā with Rādhārāṇī described as the mother of the universe. Hence, like Kātyāyanī, Mahāmāyā also—either as Kālī or as Durgā—can certainly help the devotee in his path of spiritual progress.

(c) Granting for argument's sake that Mahāmāyā i.e. Kālī or Durgā, is an ordinary goddess, there is no harm in worshipping Kālī or Durgā ; for a Vaiṣṇava is also allowed to worship other gods and goddesses on two conditions—(i) that he should pray to all these gods and goddesses for the attainment of devotion to Kṛṣṇa (sabā sthāne māgi labe kṛṣṇa-bhakti bar) and (ii) that while worshipping these gods and goddesses, he should, first, worship Lord Kṛṣṇa and then he should worship other gods or goddesses with the *prasādas* of Lord Kṛṣṇa,

Note :

(a) Nowhere in the *Vedic Saṁhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the principal *upaniṣads* there is any reference to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person. On the other hand, there are hundreds of references to Śiva or Maheśvara as the Supreme Person. The *Śvetāśvatara upaniṣad* clearly describes the greatness of Śiva as the Absolute. There are faint references also to the Supreme power of the Absolute. which was later known as Kālī or Durgā. Hence BV's contention that Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone has been established and advocated in all the *Vedas* and *upaniṣads* as the Supreme Person is completely wrong.

The point is that, according to the *Vedas* and the *upaniṣads*, the Absolute may manifest itself either as formless or as having some form. The form assumed by the Absolute is not necessarily that of Kṛṣṇa, nor of Śiva or Kālī. The Absolute is not like an ordinary human being ; it can manifest itself in any form, according to the taste or liking of the devotees. The *Rg-Veda* says—" ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti"—(*RV*, 1.164.46)—"The Existent is one, spiritualists describe it in different ways". Though these forms are mans, only Kṛṣṇa, Śiva and Kālī have been described in the later *upaniṣads* and *Purāṇas* as the highest forms of the Absolute. Accordingly in our view, (i) all the *Vedas, upaniṣads* and *Purāṇas* speak of only one Absolute Reality ; (ii) this reality may be formless or endowed with form ; and (iii) the form assumed by the Absolute may be of Kṛṣṇa, for the Vaiṣṇavites, Śiva, for the Śaivites, and Kālī, for the Śāktists.

(b) BV has displayed his utter disregard for Śiva and Kālī. But it should be noted that there is a number of *upaniṣads* and *Purāṇas* where Śiva has been eulogised as the Absolute Person and Kālī, as the Universal Mother or the motherly aspect of the Absolute. The *Skanda upaniṣad*—and *upaniṣad* belonging to the Vaiṣṇava cult—says in clear terms that Śiva and Viṣṇu are completely identical, that Viṣṇu is the heart of Śiva and Śiva is the heart of Viṣṇu, and that just as Viṣṇu is of the nature of Śiva, so Śiva is of the nature of Viṣṇu (śivāya viṣṇu-rūpāya, śiva- rupāya viṣṇave. śivasya hṛdayam viṣṇur viṣṇoś ca hṛdayaṁ śivaḥ.—yarhā śiva-mayo viṣṇur evaṁ viṣṇumayaḥ śivaḥ—*Skanda up.*, 8-9). In the Purāṇas by Vedavyāsa also, there are hundreds of references where both Śiva and Viṣṇu of Kṛṣṇa have been declared as forms of the Supreme Person. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* says that the Lord is worshipped as Śiva by some following the path shown by Śiva himself (tvām-evānye śivoktena mārgeṇa śiva-rūpiṇam. bahv-ācāryavibhedena bhagavān samupāsyate—*BP*, 10.40.8). Further, there are hundreds of Āgamas approved by Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa (mataṁ ca vāsudevena) which unequivocally declare both Śiva and Mother Goddess as identical with the Absolute. To regard all these scriptures as nonsense and to accept the validity of only those scriptures where Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa alone has been eulogised as the Lord is certainly a blind and narrow attitude.

We may add that one who has realised the multifaced nature of Brahman and has tasted an atom of the all-surpassing beauty of Śiva or Kālī could not make such remarks against Śiva and Kālī, as BV has done.

We may, here, re-iterate the great message of Sri Ramakrishna that all these paths—Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism or Śāktism—lead to the same ultimate goal. Which of these paths is to be followed by a particular aspirant will be decided by the choice or taste of that aspirant.

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ON BUDDHISM

SECTION

16

ON BUDDHISM

A. *Bhaktivedanta's Views.*

1. "Their first principle is that the creation is always existing, but if this is the case, there can be no theory of annihilation. The Buddhists maintain that annihilation or dissolution is the highest truth, if the creation is eternally existing, there is no question of dissolution or annihilation."—*CC*, 2.9.49.

2. "The Buddhists argue that the world is false, but this is not valid. The world is temporary, but it is not false. As long as we have the body, we must suffer the pleasures and pains of the body, even though we are not the body. We may not take these pleasures and pains very seriously, but they are factual nonetheless. We cannot actually say that they are false. If the bodily pains and pleasures are false, the creation would be false also."—*CC*, 2.9.49.

3. "According to the Buddhist's fifth principle, Lord Buddha is the only source for the attainment of knowledge. We cannot accept this, for Lord Buddha rejected the principles of Vedic knowledge. One must accept a principle of standard knowledge because one cannot attain the Absolute Truth simply by intellectual speculation."—*CC*, 2.9.49.

4. "It is stated that mercy is one of the qualities of a

Buddhist, but mercy is a relative thing. We show our mercy to a subordinate, to one who is suffering more than ourselves. However, if there is a superior person present, the superior person cannot be the object of our mercy. Rather, we are objects for the mercy of the superior person. Therefore showing compassion and mercy is a relative activity, it is not the Absolute Truth."—*CC*, 2.9.49.

5. "The Buddha is a *nāstika* or heretic, as he denies the validity of the *Vedas*,"—*CC*, 2.6.

6. "To the Buddhist cult, the *Vedas* are compiled by ordinary human beings. If this were the case, they would not be authoritative. From Vedic literatures we understand that shortly after the creation, Lord Brahmā was instructed in the *Vedas*. Obviously, the *Vedas* did not come from an ordinary person born in this material world."—*CC*, 2.9.49.

7. "Lord Buddha rejected the principles of Vedic knowledge"—*CC*, 2.9.49.

8. "Lord Buddha abandoned the authority of the Vedic literature and therefore rejected the ritualistic ceremonies and sacrifices recommended in the *Vedas*."—*CC*, 2 6.168.

9. "His *nirvāṇa* philosophy means stopping all material activities. Lord Buddha did not recognize the presence of transcendental forms and spiritual activities beyond the material world. He simply described voidism beyond this material existence."—*CC*, 2.6.168.

10. "...Therefore the attempt to annihilate everything in order to attain zero is an absurdity"—*CC*, 2.9.49.

11. "The Buddhist theorize that annihilation, or nirvāṇa, is the ultimate goal."—*CC*, 2.9.49.

12. "The Buddhist philosophers clearly deny both the soul and God...Thus, both of them (the Śaṅkarites and the Buddhists) are aviśuddhabuddhayaḥ, or imperfect and unclean in their knowledge and intelligence."—*CC* 1.7.114.

B. *Our observations*

1. According to the Buddhists, all the elements of the world are momentary or impermanent. Hence, the view that 'creation is always existing' does not mean that it is eternal ; it simply means that the cycle of the world is without any beginning and end. And this view is accepted in Vedānta also, where the world is described as *pravāha-nitya* or eternal as a flow.

2. (a) The pleasures and pains of our life have never been declared false by Buddha. He has accepted them as facts and that is why he advises men to overcome these pleasures and pains. This does not, again, mean that these events are eternal, for, in Buddha's view there is nothing eternal in this world of our experience. This view applied to the world as a whole means that, it is neither false nor eternal ; it is but temporary.

(b) The Mādhyamika Buddhists describe the world as false, which, however, means that in our ordinary perception, the world is not manifested in its real nature for the real nature of the world is *nirvāṇa* ("na nirvāṇasya saṁsārād asti kiñcid viśeṣaṇam"—*Mādhyamaka-kārikā*, 2.5-17).

3. (a) **Lord Buddha is certainly a source for the attainment of knowledge, and, for the Buddhists, he is the only source of knowledge. It is but natural for the Buddhists to hold such a view ; for, in any school of religion, the propagator of that system is thought to be the only source of knowledge.**

(b) If any religion is based on pure *yukti* or intellectual speculation only, it is no religion at all ; religion must primarily be based on *anubhūti* or realisation of the pure mind. Vedic knowledge is regarded as valid, since it is revealed to the realisation of the pure-minded sages. In the same way, knowledge propagated by the Buddha is also valid, as it has been revealed to his pure mind.

(c) It may be argued that if knowledge revealed to the Buddha be valid, it should not come in contradiction to the Vedic knowledge, as there cannot be any conflict between two valid knowledges. In reply, we are to say that, in reality, there is no conflict between the Vedic knowledge and the knowledge revealed to Buddha. The difference found between these two kinds of knowledge is only apparent and not real. This will be clear from the concluding Notes under this Section.

4. *'Dayā'* or *'Karuṇā'*, in the ordinary sense of 'mercy', is certainly not the Absolute Truth, and it is true that mercy flows from the superior to the interior. But *'dayā'* or *'karuṇā'* is used in the general sense of 'love' or 'co-feeling' also, and, in this sense, it is a manifestation of *preman*, the ideal of the Vaiṣṇavas. It may be mentioned that Śrī Caitanya also advised the Vaiṣṇavas to maintain *dayā* to the *jīvas*

(*jive dayā*), where '*dayā*' means love or cofeeling. *Dayā* or mercy in this sense is held in high position by all the religious leaders including Buddha. But mercy itself is not the *sādhanā* or spiritual path; and Buddha also has never held such a view.

5. The view that Buddha is a *nāstika* or heretic is held by almost all the pro-Vedic philosophers. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrī Caitanya is said to the identifying Buddha as a *nāstika*. BV has simply re-iterated this view. In reality, Buddha can in no way be called a *nāstika* (see Note 1 at the bottom of this Section). We have reasons to doubt whether a giant scholar like Śrī Caitanya really held such view. And if he really held such view, we must submit that he did so with an eye to the need of the time.

6. The *Vedas* in their liguistic aspect are certainly compiled by human beings; for languages and linguistic compositions, being the results of social and cultural evolutions, must be the creations of social beings. In their essential aspect i.e. in their aspect of knowledge, however, the *Vedas* may be regarded as eternal and impersonal, or as revealed by Īśvara, since all truths are eternal and are manifested by Brahman or the Lord. The myth that Brahmā received the *Vedas* from the Lord does not necessarily mean that he got the text of the *Vedas* as we find it extant in Indo-Aryan language. In our view, what Brahmā received from the Lord is the divine knowledge manifested later in the *Vedic* texts, while the linguistic forms of the *Vedas* were given by human sages. It is wrong to say that if the *Vedas* were composed by human beings, they

would not be authoritative, for the authoritativeness of knowledge is to be judged from its conformity with truth and not from the form of language through which the knowledge is expressed. (For more details, see Note 2 below).

7-8. (a) Buddha has not definitely abandoned the authority of the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* or the Vedic aspect of spiritual knowledge leading to liberation ; he has simply presented the same in a different way.

(b) The ritualistic ceremonies and sacrifices recommended by the *Vedas* have been rejected not only by the Buddhists but also by all the spiritualists like the Sāṁkhyists, the Yogists, the Advaitins and the Vaiṣṇavas including the Caitanyites, on the simple and solid ground that these ceremonies and sacrifices cannot bring forth liberation or *preman*, the summun bonum of human life. For this, neither Buddha nor any other spiritualist should be criticised.

9-11. *Nirvāṇa* is never a state of annihilation or voidness rather, it is an inexpressible state of fullness, which may be equated to the formless Brahman of Advaita Vedānta, (See Note 1 below for details).

12. The problem whether Buddha denies the soul and God will be discussed in Note 1 at the bottom of this Section. From that discussion, it will be clear that it is not the Buddhists but those incapable of understanding the Buddhistic philosophy that are imperfect and unclean in their knowledge and intelligence.

Notes :

1. The general idea about the Buddha and his philosophy idea is that (a) Buddha is a *nāstika* or heretic, (b) that he is anti-Vedic rejecting the validity of the *Vedas* including Vedānta or the *Upaniṣads*, (c) that he does not accept the existence of God, (d) that he regards the self as identical with the fleeting consciousness and denies the existence of a permanent self and (e) that *nirvāṇa* propounded by him as the summum bonum of life is something void.

In our view, however, all these charges against Buddha are totally based on wrong notions. Let us discuss the points serially.

(a) Before entering into the problem whether Buddha is really a *nāstika* or not, we must be clear before hand about the meanings of the terms *nāstika* and *āstika*. In popular usage, *āstika* is one who believes the existence of God and *nāstika* is one who does not believe the existence of God. In philosophical discourses, *āstika* is taken to mean one who believes in the validity of the *Vedas* and *nāstika* is one who does not believe in the validity of the *Vedas*. Considered from the view-point of both these definitions, Buddha is declared as a *nāstika*, as he is said to have denied the existence of God and to have rejected the validity of the *Vedas*.

Here our submission is that both these definitions are defective. Early Mīmāṁsā and Classical Sāṁkhya are generally explained as denying the existence of God, but they are never regarded as *nāstikas*. Further, followers of other religions like Islam and Christianity do not regard the Vedas as valid, but yet we never call them *nāstikas*. Thus, both the above definitions being defective, we are to search for a correct definition for these two terms and we find such a definition in the grammatical tradition.

Pāṇini defines these terms in the aphorism 'asti-nāsti-diṣṭaṁ matiḥ' of his *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. And in explaining this aphorism, all the grammarians have uniformly maintained for the last two thousand years that an *āstika* is one who believes in *paraloka* or the other world and a *nāstika* is one who does not believe in *paraloka*. Considered from the view-point of these definitions, Buddhism and Jainism must be regarded as an *āstikā*-systems, as they believe in *paraloka*. This should not be regarded as a new message or a new coinange, since this view is already there in Indian tradition. Śāntarakṣita in his *Tattva-saṁgraha* describes the Buddhists as *āstikas*. Haribhadra Sūri also in his *Saṭ-darśana-samuccaya* describes the Buddhists and the Jainas as *āstikas*, and under the category of *nāstika* philosophy, he brings the Cārvākas only.

Even on accepting the former two definitions of '*āstika*' and '*nāstika*', Buddha cannot be regarded as a *nāstika* as he does not really deny the existence of God and the validity of the *Vedas* This will be clear from our following discussions.

(b) On the question whether Buddha is anti-Vedic or not, we have to say that nowhere in the *Tripiṭak a* we find Buddha saying anything Against the *Vedas*. What he said was against the Vedic sacrifices, specially, against animal sacrifices. That, too, he did, not on the ground that these are fruitless, but on the ground that these sacrifices do not lead man to the highest goal of life. This view cannot be regarded as anti-Vedic. In support of our contention, we have the following points to say:

The Vedic sacrifices are accepted on all hands as giving fruits either in this life or in the life hereafter—either in heaven or in some other life. All these fruits are temporary, as they do not lead us to an eternal life. Neither the Vedic sages nor the Mīmāṅsakas—who claim to be the foremost among the followers of the *Vedas*—have said any where that by the performance of sacrifices one can attain the summum bonum of life i.e. liberation or the knowledge of Brahman or of the self. There are, of course. passages like "apāma somam amṛtā abbūma" —"We drank soma and became amṛta or immortal", from which one may think that liberation can be attained by sacrifices. But here *amṛtatva* or immortality does not mean immortality in its true sense i.e. immortality attained in liberation : it means simply a long period running up to the dissolution of the material world. That liberation cannot be attained by Vedic sacrifices is declared again and again by the Upaniṣads.

Accordingly, it is natural that those who want to attain liberation or to get the real knowledge of Brahman or of the self, will avoid performing Vedic sacrifices. That is way the Sāṁkhyists have seriously criticised the tradition of Vedic sacrifices as impure, as giving temporary results, and as opposed to liberation. In all the later proo-Vedāntic systems of religion, especially, in the Vaiṣṇava systems, Vedic sacrifices have been abandoned as not leading man to the highest goal. Animal sacrifice, in particular, has been totally discarded as impure in these systems. But for that we never identify these systems as anti-Vedic. Then, why should we regard Buddha as anti-Vedic ? There is no reason whatsoever, The point, however, is that Buddha was a revolutionist ; he was running before time i.e, he propounded his theories when the Indian society was not mature enough to realise his teachings.

Buddha was not against the Vedāntic thoughts or the philosophical doctrines contained in the *Upaniṣads* also. This will be clear from our discussions on Buddha's view of God and the self.

(c) *Whether Buddha denies God or not* :

Before giving a verdict on this problem, we must be clear as to what is meant by 'God'. The general idea is that God is the highest being—personal or impersonal—having infinite knowledge and power, who creates, sustains and guides the world at every step of its functioning. In our view, this concept of God does not suit to all cases. The Mīmāṅsakas accept God but that God is not the world-creator or world-Governor. Jaimini accepts Parabrahman but it is not the creator-God. Śaṅkara accepts creator-God but this creator-God is not the highest reality ; he is designated as 'Apara-Brahman' or Lower Brahman. The highest reality accepted by Śaṅkara is qualityless and actionless ; it is not related to the world-process. God accepted in Yoga may somehow be called the world-guide, but he is not the world-creator. To include all these cases, we propose to define God as "the highest and eternal spiritual principle forming the ground of the universe." This definition will be applicable to the Parabrahman of Śaṅkara also. Now, from our following discussions, it will be clear that *Nirvāṇa* spoken of by Buddha as the *summum bonum* of life is also the highest and eternal spiritual principle forming the ground of the universe. So, if the definition of God proposed by us be accepted, Buddha may very well be regarded as a theist.

The popular idea of God as mentioned earlier is also found in Buddha's philosophy, since Buddha has accepted a universal impersonal principle called Dhamma or Dharma as guiding the universe at every step of its functioning. Buddha advises man to surrender himself to this principle, when he says 'dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi'. This concept of Dhamma is certainly a substitute of God in populrr sense or of Apara Brahman of Advaita Vedānta, and Nirvana is a substitute of Para Brahman of the same system.

(d) Gautama Buddha is known as the propagator of the Anātmavāda or Nairātmyavāda, i.e., the theory of the non-existence of the self. This theory propounded by Buddha has been strongly defended by most of the later Buddhists but has been seriously criticised by all the *āstika*-philosophers and the Jainas. Of course, among the Buddhists themselves, there are some like the Vātsīputrīyas and the Sammitīyas, who deny the position that Buddha rejects the existence of the self (*Kathāvatthu*, I). In modern times also, there are certain thinkers like George Grimm, Prof. S. Radhakrishnan and others who strongly assert that Buddha does not reject the idea of the self. It is clear from this divergence of views even among his followers themselves that Buddha was not explicit in his exposition of the theory of the self. And hence, this problem calls the attention of all who are interested in Buddhism.

It is to be noted that Buddha has never categorically and uniformly said that the self does not exist ; nor has he said that it exists. Of course, at places, Buddha has seriously objected to the remarks of the Brahmins and the Śramaṇas that he is nihilist propounding the theory of the annihilation of the self (*Majjhima Nikāya*, XII). From this, some assume that Buddha accepts the eternal self. Had he not accepted eternal, self, it is argued, he would not have categorically said that he is not propounding the theory the annihilation of the self. On other occasions, Buddha has said thet the 'self' or 'I' is the root of ail pains and that for the destruction of pains, men should root out this belief in the self (*Majjhima Nikāya*. 1.115, 138). This forces some to think that Buddha denies the eternal self.

Now, the problem is: Does Buddha actually deny the existence of any self? And if so, what kind of self is it that Buddha denies? Or does he accept the existence of any self? And if so, what kind of self is it that Buddha accepts?

The Theory of Impermanence.

Before entering into the problem, we should, first, have some idea about how Buddha looks upon the world. According to Buddha the whole universe is a flux; there is nothing in the world—mental or non-mental—which can be regarded is permanent. For him the material or non-mental world is composed of four elements, namely, earth, water, fire, and air Alt these elements aie subject to change and are, thus, impermanent; they cannot remain the same for two consecutive points of time. What we call a phenomenon is nothing but series of changing states (*Saṁyukta Nikāya*, XXII. 12, 18. 66, 90 : *Majjhima Nikāya*, XXVI). But the changes occur in such a rapid succession that it is not possible for us to grasp them, and we are led into the belief that a single phenomenon continues to exist. In the same way, Buddha has analytically shown that in the mental plane also there is nothing which can be regarded as permanent: Sensation, perception, consciousness and all other mental elements are always changing (*Saṁyukta Nikāya*, XXII. 6. 22. 85; *Majjhima Nikāya*, II and XXXV; *Mahāvagga*, [illegible]. 8.). This theory of Impermanence developed into the Theory of Momentariness in the hands of the later Buddhists. According to this developed theory, a thing changes at every moment or *kṣaṅa*—the smallest unit of time. Every moment, all the objects of the world are destroyed and other similar things come into their places, though it seems that the same things persist through all the passing moments, just as the flame of a candle changes every moment, though the same flame seems to be persisting all the while. Thus, all our bodies, ideas, emotions etc. and all the objects around us are ever in change (*Tattva-Saṁgraha* of Śāntarakṣita, verse, 588 ; *Milinda Pañha*, II. 2. 9.) ; there is nothing permanent in the world.

Denial of a Permanent Individual Self

Quite in harmony with the Theory of Impermanence or Momentariness, the Buddhists do not find in the individual any permanent or eternal self as distinct from the elements of individuality. In their view, what we call the individual is merely a *saṁghāta* or aggregate of five *skandhas* (*Majjhima Nikāya*, XI. IV ; *Saṁyukta Nikāya*, XXII. 117.) or groups, namely, *rūpa* or the physical body. *vedanā* or feeling, *saṁjñā* or perception, *saṁskāra* or mental disposition and *vijñāna* or consciousness. Of these elements, the first denotes the material body, while the rest four elements are psychical. Hence, an individual is nothing but a mind-body-complex. And, as all these elements of an individual are ever in change, the individual must be regarded as ever-changing and ever-becoming without a being.

It is very much clear that our physical elements of sensation, feeling, emotion, etc., undergo changes every moment. As to the incessant change of the physical elements also, there should not be any doubt. But though all the elements of our individuality undergo continuous changes, we think that there is some permanent element running in and through these elements, to which we apply the term 'I' or 'self'. Actually, however, there is no such permanent 'I' or 'self' continuing to exist in and through these ever-changing elements of personality. The belief in a constant and immutable self in the individual is an utterly and entirely foolish idea for Buddha (*Majjhima Nikāya*, XXII). Nun Vajirā says that there is no such thing as person ; what we call a person is merely a collocation of changing aggregates, just as a chariot means a collocation of its parts (*Therigāthā.* verse. 10). In the *Milinda Pañha*, it has been shown that the name 'Nāgasena' denotes no soul ; it is merely as appellation given to the five aggregates constitutings the empirical individual (*Milinda Pañha*, II. 1.1). Buddha again and again says that neither any of these elements, nor a collocation of all the elements can be regarded as the self ; because, these are all perishable (*Majjhima Nikāya*, XXII) In the renowned sermon at Benares, Buddha declared that matter cannot be the self, because, if it were so, the body would not be subjected to disease, and one would be able to control the body one's sweet will. One the same grouud, the other four elements of perception, feeling, disposition and intellect are also regarded as not-self. It is also pointed out that, as the five aggregates are ever in chacnge and are accompanied by misery, they cannot be the self. In Buddha's view, whatever is impermanent is miserable, and whatever is miserable is not-self. He thus says ; "But that which is transient, painful, subject to all vicissitude, is it possible to regard it ; This in mine, this am I, this is my self ? (*Majjhima Nikāya*, XXXV) Thus, according to Buddha, the analysis of the components of an individual does not point to the existence of a permanent self. A self believed to be persisting in and through the changes of the elements of an individual and migrating from one birth to another is a fiction for Buddha.

It is argued by the opponents that the feeling of an identical 'I' in different stages of life points to some permanent self persisting throughout these different stages. But, according to the Buddhists, such a feeling of 'I' cannot prove the existence of permanent self. They argue that in the proposition 'this is that book', the feeling of the identity of the book is due to a confusion between an object of memory referring to the past and an object perceived at the present moment by the senses. In the same way, the recognition 'I am that I' results from the confusion between certain ideas or emotions arising in memory and similar ideas or emotions of the present moment (*Nyāyā Mañjarī*, Part II, 'Kṣaṇikatva-vāda-nirākaraṇa; Bhāṣya on 'Pudgala-Viniścaya' of *Abhidharmakośa*). Self-recognition is thus not a proof for the existence of a permanent self.

It is argued by the Naiyāyikas, who accept a permanent individual self, that at least for the observation of the changes of the elements, a permanent perceiver or self should be accepted. To this. Ratnakīrti replies that for the observation of any concomitance in the form of 'agreement in presence' or 'agreement in absence', no permanent agent is necessary. He holds that, when certain conditions are present, there arises the knowledge of the concomitance in presence, and when other conditions are present, there arises the knowledge of the concomitance in absence. Granting that the knowledge of the concomitance is subsequent to the concomitance itself, the Buddhists regagd the knowledge of the concomitance of the succeeding moment as holding within itself the experience of the conditions of the preceding moment. And, it is this experience that takes the place of a permanent experience (*Kṣaṇabhaṅga-Siddhi* of Ratnakīrti).

To one who accepts a permanent self in the psycho-physical set, we may put a question : Is the self identical with or different from the phycho-physical set? If identical the self ceases to be permanent, and if different, it cannot be denoted by the term 'I' or 'self'. In other words, a permanent self is not be found in the mind-body-complex.

It may be argued that, although our ordinary knowledge does not reveal the permanent self, realisations of the sages affirm the existence of such a permanent and immutable self. In reply, we can say, on the strength of the assertions of the sages themselves, that the self realised by them is not the individual self denoted by the term 'I' but the Universal Self which lies beyond anything conceivable. It cannot therefore be expressed by the term 'I' If it is said that the Universal Self is the real self then it will amount to saying that it the mind-body-complex there is no real and permanent 'self' or 'I'.

The Advaitins, who accept a permanent self behind the mind-body-complex, hold that the individual self is identical with the Universal Self which is self-luminous, unlimited and immutable. A section of the Advaitins known as the Avaccheda-vādins say that the Universal Self limited by individual ignorance or the mind thinks itself to be the individual self confined to the psycho-physical organism, though it is actually not so. This means that, it is the 'indikidualisation' that is false and not the individual self', because the latter is identical with the Universal Self.

An examination of this contention reveals that it is not logically tenable. Just as it is not possible for the unlimited, self-luminous and immutable self 'to be' limited, non-luminous and mutable, so also it is impossible for such a self 'to think' itself to be so. If it is said that it is because of ignorance that the self thinks, so, our answer will be : It is equally impossible for the self-luminous self to be subject to ignorance. If it is said that the self is not actually subjected to ignorance, but falsely thinks itself to be so, then it will be tautologous, since the assertion 'thinks falsely' means that it has already been accepted as subjected to ignorance. Hence, if the self is regarded as self-luminous and unlimited, it cannot be said to be conditioned by anything like the mind or ignorance. Again, from the view of the Avacchedavādins themselves that this limitation or individualisation is only seeming or false, we can argue that individualisation being false, the individual self is also false.

Another section of the Advaitins known as the Pratibimbavādins have realised the unreasonableness of the Theory of Limitation or Avacchedavāda and hold that the unlimited and immutable Brahman cannot be limited by the mind or ignorance. A group of these Pratibimbavādins say that Branman is reflected into the mind or individual ignorance and becomes the *jīva* or the empirical self (*Vivaraṇa* IX 'Varṇaka'). Pushing this position a little further, we may argue that, since the *jīva* is a reflection of Brahman, it must be false and, hence, it cannot be a permanent entity. And, some Advaitavedāntins like Sureśvarācārya and others are bold enough to accept this logical necessity and declare that the *jīva* is false (*Siddhānta-leśa-saṁgraha*, II. 42). If it is held that 'as the individual self' the self is false, while as the 'Universal Self' it is real and permanent, we may ask whether the Universal Self exists in one individual only or in all the individuals ? If it exists in one individual, then with the movement of the individual, it will also move, and, hence, it will undergo birth and re-birth along with the individual. In that case, the self will not be immutable. If it exists in all the individuals equally, it will have nothing to do with the birth and rebirth of an individual. Such a Universal Self cannot be denoted by the term 'I' and, hence, cannot be regarded as the individual self, Thus, the concept of a permanent individual self is totally untenable, and it is more logical to hold with the Buddhists that there is no permanent individual self.

Acceptance of an Empirical self—a Santāna.

Now, the question is : if there is no self, what is it that is denoted by the term 'I' ? It can be said in reply that though the Buddha does not accept a permanent unchanging self behind the psycho-physical organism, he accepts a provisional or empirical self which is not a permanent reality, but a *santāna* or chain of ever-changing elements. And it is this provisional self that is denoted by the term 'I'. What the Buddha means to say is this: Whenever we use the term 'I' or 'self', we denote by it some or all the elements of the psycho-physical set or the body endowed with consciousness (*Saṁyukta Nikāya.* V. 10 and XII. 81; *Majjhima Nikāya.* CIX). This is the empirical or provisional self, which serves our practical purposes. This empirical self is not permanent but momentary and changeable, because the psycho-physical elements are always changing. And it is accepted on all hands that the mind-body is the root-cause of selfishness, hatred, etc. and, therefore, of all pains. Hence, Buddha, while accepting such a self, pleads at the same time to destroy it (*Saṁyukta Nikāya,* XXII. 117). That is to say, Buddha tells us to destroy the self which is regarded by the ordinary people as identical with the mind-body and which is impermanent.

Now, if no permanent self is said to exist in and through the elements of an individual, some serious objections will arise: First, how can we explain the fact of memory? Memory indicates identity of the subject at two points of time, because the experiencer and the remember must be the same. It can never happen that one knows, and another remembers (*Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha,* 'Ārhata'; *Tattva-Saṁgraha.* verse 500). Secondly, Buddha is an ardent propounder of the Law of Karman.. But if no permanent self is accepted, the law falls to the ground. The Law of Karman states that one is sure to get the fruits of one's own action and that the doer of an action and the reaper of its fruits must be the same. But if a person is always changing, it will have to be said that one acts, and another gets the fruits—a position which goes against the very law (*Sarva-darśana.-saṁgraha,* Ārhata; *Tattva-saṁgraha.* verse 476). Thirdly, in the absence of any constant self, how can we explain the Theory of Rebirth which has so firmly been spoken of by Buddha again and again. In other words, how can we explain the continuity of a person through different births in the absence of a permanent self (*Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha*, Ārhata and Abhyankaras' comt. on it) ?

The Buddhists meet these objections with the help of the theory of cause-and-effect-relation. According to this theory, each momentary entity impresses itself on the entity or effect following and perfumes it, just as a plant of jasmine flower, grown from a seed imbued with a dye, brings forth jasmine flowers of similar dye. Applying this theory against the first objection, it is said that when a person experiences an object, a seed of memory is implanted in the consciousness-continuum, and when this seed ripens in due course of time, memory comes into being by a casual necessity, without the agency of any entity like perceiver or rememberer (*Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha*, 'Ārhata'; *Tattva-saṁgraha*, verse 502-505). Thus, the fact of memory can be explained by the theory of cause-and-effect relation; it requires simply an earlier experience, and no agent. That is to say, an earlier experience causes the rise of a memory when suitable conditions are present. Applying the same argument against the second objection, it is said that the action performed at any point of a *santāna* produces the relevant effect at some later point of the same *santāna*. It cannot, therefore, be said that the Law of Karman becomes invalid in the absence of a continuous entity or self (*Tattva-saṁgraha*, verse. 504). The third objection is also steered clear on the basis of the same theory of cause-and-effect relation. The actions performed by an individual—whether in the earlier lives or in the present life—go on producing series of effects, just as a ripple created in the waters of a pond produces a series of ripples. These series of effects created by actions run ceaselessly and uninterruptedly through different births. The accumulated effects of *karman* exist in the *santāna* or individual in the form of *saṁskāras* or mental dispositions, which are transmitted to the last unit of consciousness of a life-continuum. It is this last unit of consciousness called *pratisandhi-vijñāna* that brings about rebirth and transmits the *karmic* effects of the earlier life stored in the form of *saṁskāras* to the next life (*Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi*, 'Triṁśikā', verse 19 and comt. on it ; *Milinda Pañha*. III. 5 ; *Abhidharma-koṣa*. III. 24). Here, there is no necessity of a permanent and constant self ; the continuity of a series of ever-changing consciousness can explain the position very well. Just as from a candle another candle—which is different from but causally connected with the earlier one—may be lighted, so a new life can come into being from the present life. Rebirth is, therefore, not transmigration or the migration of the same self from one life to another, but is the causation of the next life by the present one (*Milinda Pañha*, III. 5 ; Candrakirti's comt. on *Mādhyamika-kārikā*, II. 25 ; *Abhidharma-kośa*, III. 24).

The self is thus replaced by an unbroken stream of consciousness or *vijñāna-santāna* which acts through different lives. This conception of *santāna* guided by the iron-chain of casuality can explain why there is no overlapping between the succeeding stages of two individuals—say. Devadatta and Haradatta. The elements of Devadatta produce the chain of the succeeding elements similar to themselves, whereas those of Haradatta produce another chain similar to themselves and dissimilar to those of Devadatta (*Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha*, 'Ārhata'). While explaining this concept of an ever-changing self, Nāgasena in Milinda Pañha states : Though the flame of a candle changes every moment, as a continuum it is one, because the succeeding flame is conditioned by the earlier one. When milk changes into curd, the owner of the milk is not confused whether he has right to the curd, since curd is conditioned by milk. In a like manner, the continuity of an individual is maintained by a casual chain in the different stages of infancy, youth and so on. This is why when the girlwife becomes aged, the husband is not confused whether he has the right to accept her as his wife or not *Milinda Pãñha*, II. 2.10-14.).

Now, against those who accept a permanent self, we may raise a counter-question : How do the eternalists explain the fact of memory ? If the self is eternal and immutable, it cannot acquire knowledge even, because acquisition of knowledge involves a change in the subject. Even if it acquires knowledge, it cannot forget any experience, since it is unchangeable. The question of memory therefore does not arise. Memory implies a gap between the past and the present, which is not possible for an unchanging self. It may be said by the Vedāntins that it is the empirical self or self conditioned by the psycho-physical organism that experiences and remembers, and not the transcendental self. In that case, we shall have to say that the empirical self, being the doer (*kartā*), knower (*jñātā*) and enjoyer (*bhoktā*), must be regarded as ever-changing or mutable. And, if such an empirical self is said to experience and remember, we shall have to say that the eternalists also in their final analysis take resort to the Buddhistic position that memory is possible in a changing self.

In a like manner, the Law of Karman also becomes inexplicable, if it is held that the self is permanent and unchangeable. It is the empirical or changing self that performs actions and reaps the fruits of these actions, and not the permanent self. The Law of Karman can thus be explained only by holding that the self is impermanent (*Tattva-saṁgraha*. verse. 503). An unchanging self cannot act and, hence, the Law of Karman has no reference to it.

As to the question of rebirth also, we may ask, whether the eternal self of the eternalists undergoes birth and death. The

Vedāntins, the Sāṁkhyists and others regard the self as devoid of birth and death. The Vedāntins hold that what undergoes birth and death is not the self, but the Vijñānamaya-kośa i.e. buddhi or intellect and the sense-organs taken together, or the *sūkṣma-deha* i.e. fine body having mind, sense-organs, motor-organs and vital forces as its elements (*Vedānta-sāra*, 67). And the Vijñānamaya-kośa or the fine body must be accepted as undergoing incessant changes because of karman. That means, what undergoes birth and rebirth is not the permanent self, but the ever-changing fine body. No permanent self is therefore required for the explanation of the fact of rebirth. Thus, in the final analysis, the Vedāntins also have to accept the Buddhistic position that the fact of rebirth can be explained only by accepting an ever-changing self.

Midway Course between Eternalism and Nihilism.

It will, now, be clear as to why the Buddha regards the self some times as existent and sometimes as non-existent. When the self is said to be existent, it means that the empirical self exists, and when it is said to be non-existent, it means that the permanent individual self does not exist. Buddha is said to hold these two contradictory views, i.e., the 'existence' and 'non-existence' of the self to show a midway course between Eternalism and Nihilism. Nāgārjuna in his commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* says that when Tathāgata preached that the *ātman* exists his object was to save men from falling into the heresy of Nihilism (*Ucchedavāda*), and when he taught that there is no *ātman* his object was to save men from falling into the opposite heresy of Eternalism (*Śāśvatavāda*). In Nāgārjuna's view, if the self means the empirical self—the experiencer of happiness, sorrow etc.—which is ever-changing or impermanent, then 'it is'; but if the self means a permanent and immutable individual entity, then 'it is not' (Sogen, *Systems of Buddhistic Thought*, pp. 18-19). Here, it may be said, in accordance with the interpretation of the later Buddhists, that Buddha in such cases insists on the *adhikāribheda* i.e. the difference of the capacities of the hearers (MM. Umesh Mishra, *History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. I, p. 377). The real position, however, is this that the Buddha and his followers emphatically deny the existence of a permanent individual self imagined to be a concrete agent—the thinker, doer, and experiencer—and thought to be different from the psycho-physical organism, yet enshrined in it.

A Fresh Problem.

Now, the point to be noted is this : Buddha does never say that 'there is no self' ; he only describes the elements of individuality as not-self. But this is not necessarily a negation of the self itself. A. B. Keith observes that this doctrine "does not, in point of fact, deny in express terms that there may exist another realm of existence which is exempt from empirical determination and which therefore might be regarded as absolutely Real" (Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 61). It is also remarkable that in the *Brahmajālasutta* where various views regarding the *ātman* are mentioned, no question is raised whether the self exists or not (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I).

When thirty Brahmin youths inquire about the whereabouts of a run-away woman, Buddha tells them, "What is of greater importance, O Youths, to search for a woman, or to search for a your 'I' (*Mahāvagga*, I. 14) ? Now, this 'I' or 'self' cannot be the conglomeration of the physical or psychical elements. For, as it is already there, none should be advised to search for it. Moreover, Buddha always describes the elements of individuality as not-self. Hence, the 'I' or 'self' spoken hereof must be something lying beyond the elements of the individual. When the monk Vacchagotta inquires, 'if there is any self', Buddha keeps silent. When the monk asks, 'if there is no self', Buddha again keeps silent. After Vacchagotta's departure, Buddha, asked by his disciple Ānanda, says, "If I had answered 'the self is', then he would have confirmed the doctrine of the Śramaṇas and the Brahmins who believe in the permanence of the self. If I had answered, 'the self is not', then he would have confirmed the doctrine of those who believe in the annihilation of the self" (*Saṁyukta Nikāya*, XI. V. 10). This shows that the Buddha does not propound nihilism, and that he accepts the existence of some self. It is remarkable that throughout his sermons, Buddha tries to show as to what cannot be regarded as the self. This clearly indicates that the problem with Buddha is not 'whether there is any self, but 'what the self is not.'

(e) Many scholars, oriental and occidental, have explained *nirvāṇa* or liberation conceived by the Buddhists to be a state of annihilation or extinction of the individual. On the other hand, some hold that it is a positive state of eternal, pure and infinite consciousness and bliss. Still others hold that *nirvāṇa* is an inconceivable and inexpressible eternal state.

Those who regard *nirvāṇa* as a negative state, base their theory on the fact that *nirvāṇa* has sometimes been indicated by the term *śūnya* meaning 'void', and that the Buddha has sometimes compared the state of *nirvāṇa* to the extinction of fire. Against this view, we may put forward the following arguments :

It is true that *nirvāṇa* has sometimes been called *śūnya*. But the term 'śūnya' should not be explained without any reference to other relevant terms and concepts. For *nirvāṇa* has been described not only as śūnya but also as fullness. It has also been declared as an immeasurable and unfathomable state to be realised only by the sages. To reconcile the concept of '*śūnya*' with these descriptions, we are forced to say that '*śūnaya*' does not mean 'void'; it means 'seemingly void' or 'void from our empirical point of view'. We may compare the term '*śūnya*' used by the Buddhists with the term '*asat*' used in the *Upaniṣads* with reference to Brahman in its pre-creation state, where '*asat*' means not 'non-existent' but seemingly non-existent'—'*asat iva*.' In reality, '*śūnya*' means an inexplicable reality, as Nāgārjuna in his *Mādhyamaka-kārikā* (17.9) asserts. (See also Jaidev Singh, *Mādhyamika Philosophy*, P. 39 ; *Majjhima Nikāya*, 72nd Discourse). It should not, therefore, be taken for granted that the term 'śūnya' indicates *nirvāṇa* as a state of voidity. As regards the comparison of *nirvāṇa* to the extinction of fire, we may argue along with N. Dutta and George Grimm that the extinction of fire does not mean its non-existence, at least from the Indian stand-point. Even when extinguished, the fire exists in some form or other, though it is not manifested because of the absence of fuel. It is true that after extinction the fire cannot be located anywhere, but yet it can be regarded as existing everywhere, since it is dissolved into the vast fire which exists everywhere. In a like manner, the Perfect One cannot be located anywhere, but yet he is everywhere (George Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha*, p. 266). *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* thus declares that *nirvāṇa* is not extinction but disappearance in the deep, immeasurable and difficult-to-fathom state of existence (*Majjhima Nikāya*, 72).

And, actually, the Buddha does never describe nirvāṇa as annihilation ; he simply says that it is an annihilation of false desires and sufferings. The Buddha propounds a religion in which *nirvāṇa* has been declared as the goal of life. If that nirvāṇa be annihilation, then Buddhism cannot be a religion at all ; it will have to be regarded as a form of heresy not much different from that of the Cārvākas. And for the Buddha himself also, to regard *nirvāṇa* as an annihilation of the self is a 'wicked heresy'. He categorically says that he does not hold the view that the self is annihilated in liberation. What he bids men to throw off is, he asserts, only the non-ego consisting of the five constituents. Thus, he says : "And, monks, against me, thus teaching and preaching, many ascetics and Brahmins falsely, groundlessly, untruly, in defiance of fact, bring accusation thus : 'A nihilist is this ascetic Gotama. He preaches the cutting off, the destruction, the nullification of the present living being'. I teach the annihilation of craving, the annihilation of hatred, the annihilation of delusion, I teach the annihilation of manifold evil things that do not pertain to salvation." (*Majjhima Nikāya*, 22). Thus, nirvāṇa is simply the extinction of the components of our individuality and also of our evil passions and ignorance. It is notable that a disciple named Yamaka understood the theory of the Buddha in the sense that, on the dissolution of the body, the liberated one is annihilated and is no more in existence. Śāriputra, the greatest disciple of the Buddha, then called him and explained to him in detail that such a doctrine was not taught by his master. In the close of the conversation, Yamaka submitted saying, 'I have abandoned that wicked view and have competely understood the high doctrine' (*Saṁyukta Nikāya*, 22.65).

Like the Buddha, his close disciples also hold that *nirvāṇa* is merely the annihilation of worldly evils. Thus, Śāriputra says : "Annihilation of lust, evil desires and delusion is *nirvāṇa*". A nun in the *Therīgāthā* says, "Gone out of the fire within, I am now cool". Another says, "I have become calm by the attainment of *nirvāṇa*" (*Saṁyukta Nikāya*, 38 1 ; *Therīgāthā*, 18.86). In other words, *nirvāṇa* is the annihilation of the empirical ego, and not of the self. Max Müller and Childers, after a systematic examination of all the passages relating to *nirvāṇa* have come to the conclusion that 'there is not one passage which would require that its meaning should be annihilation'. (S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I. p. 449). *Nirvāṇa* is thus never void or nothing.

It is not enough to say that *nirvāṇa* is not annihilation, we must rather say that it is a positive reality. It is described in the canonical scriptures as changeless (*dhruva*), eternal (*sāssata*), immutable (*aviparināma-dhamma*) and immortality (*amata-padam*). The *Kathāvatthu* declares that *nirvāṇa* is a real, eternal and unchangeable state ; it is devoid of origination, change and destruction. The *Dhammapada* says that one who attains *nirvāṇa*, attains immortality. Thus, *nirvāṇa* is, in reality, an eternal or unchanging state. Not only that, it is a state of highest bliss : "Bliss is *nirvāṇa*, bliss is *nirvāṇa*" exchaims Śāriputra (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 9.34 ; *Dhammapada*, 'Appamada-vagga,' 1.3.). The *Dhammapada*, the *Udāna* and the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* also declare *nirvāṇa* to be a state of bliss, highest bliss and unshakeable bliss (nibbāṇaṁ paramaṁ sukhaṁ-*Dhammapada*, 203). Further, *nirvāṇa* is of the nature of pure consciousness. The Buddha says : 'It is *vijñāna* (consciousness), which is signless, infinite, radiant on all sides, where all distinctions cease'. The *Sarva-siddhānta-sāra-saṁgraha* says that final deliverance is declared by the sage Buddha to be nothing other than a flow of faultless state of consciousness (*Sarva-siddhānta-sāra-saṁgraha*, 2.4.21 ; S. Radhakrishnan, Indian *Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 448). *Nirvāṇa* is thus a positive and eternal reality and a plane of absolute bliss and consciousness. In it, one attains complete-ness, perfection, peace, calm, bliss, happiness, purity and freshness. The Buddha has clearly said that *nirvāṇa* is a state of moral perfection, highest freedom, bliss, great peace and immortality (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 9.34 ; *Majjhima Nikāya*, 122).

At times, it is true, the Buddha has declined to describe *nirvāṇa* as a positive state. But it is also true that he has declined to describe it as a negative state. The reason behind this attitude is that, in reality, *nirvāṇa* cannot be described either as positive or as negative, since it is a state in which all worldly experiences cease. It is not possible to describe *nirvāṇa* as existent or non-existent. If we call it existent, one many think it to be something perceptible like a jar, and if we call it non-existent, some may imagine it to be something like a sky-flower. But *nirvāṇa* is like neither ; it is immeasurable, indefinable and unfathomable. Thus, with reference to the Perfect One, the Buddha says : "He is above all comprehensibility, he is inscrutable, immeasurable like the great occan. It were false to say 'He is', as it were just false to say, 'He is not" (*Majjhima Nikāya*, 72).

In this way, the Buddha has again and again described the state of *nirvāṇa* as inexpressible. The *Suttanipāta* also says that the nature of a liberated perfect saint is immeasurable, infinite and inexpressible by conventional language ('atthaṁgatassa na pamāṇam atthi yena naṁ vajju taṁ tassa natthi'-*Sutta nipāta*, pp. 206-7). Again, in a conversation with the king Prasenjit, Nun Khemā says that, just as it is not possible to count the sand-particles on the bank of the river Ganges and to measure the water-drops of the ocean, so it is impossible to ascertain the nature of Tathāgata after death. She says that the Perfect One is "deep, immeasurable and unfathomable like the great occan. That a perfected one exists beyond death does not apply ; that a perfected one does not exists beyond death does not apply." (*Saṁyukta Nikāya*, 44.1.) It is very clear from all these statements that *nirvāṇa* is never a negative state ; it is rather a positive reality. But it is so deep and rich that its nature cannot be conceived by human thought, nor can it be expressed by the ordinary human language. At best, it can be described as a state of perfection and immortality, as a state of eternal and infinite consciousness, and as a state of eternal peace and eternal bliss. It is not merely the end of pains and sufferings but also a positive state of bliss, may, it is the highest reality. (Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha*, P. 38).

The Vaibhāṣikas regard *nirvāṇa* as a positive state of existence. They hold that it is a pure and perfect state free from all pains and evils. Dr. T. R. V Murti says ; "The Vaibhāṣikas or any school of Buddhism never took nirvāṇa as nothing, but as an *asaṁskṛta-dharma*, some sort of noumenal unconditioned reality behind the play of phenomena...As being identical with the state of the Tathāgata after his death, no Buddhist school ever denied its reality. Only it was in-expressible". (T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 272).

According to the earlier Sautrāntikas, *nirvāṇa* is an end of all manifestations, having no positive counterpart. It is a total extinction of one's individual existence. (Dr. Satkari Mukherji, *The Buddhist Theory of Universal Flux*. pp. 266-7). But this position is subject to serious criticism. First, the pure and impersonal consciousness attained by the enlightened ones cannot come to an end in liberation, since it is not opposed by any hostile entity. Secondly, if *nirvāṇa* be a total extinction of one's individuality, why should it be propounded as the goal of life ? The later Sautrāntikas, therefore, hold that *nirvāṇa* is not total extinction. According to them, in *nirvāṇa* a pure and subtle consciousness continues to exist (*Ibid.* pp. 265-6 ; Theo. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*. p. 49.).

The Yogācāras hold that in *nirvāṇa* one attains *advaya-vijñāna* or non-dual knowledge. It consists in the insight into the Ultimate Reality or Suchness (Tathatā) and in the realisation of truth revealed in one's in most consciousness. Thus, Vasubandhu says that nirvāṇa is absolute, eternal and immutable ; it is devoid of all passions, and is absolutely pure ; it lies beyond our speech and comprehension ; it is the highest good and infinite bliss." (advaya-laksanam vajnaptimatram"—Trimsika ; Theo. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, pp. 52-55).

The Mādhyamikas declare that *nirvāṇa* is far beyond human comprehension : It is neither existent nor non-existent, neither both existent and non-existent, nor a negation of both existent and non-existent. It is called *śūnya* in the sense that, being inconceivable and inexpressible, it does not admit of any worldly conception. Thus, in the view of the Mādhyamikas, *nivāṇa* is indeterminate ; it cannot be described as *vijñaptimātra* or pure consciousness also, since that position will make *nirvāṇa* determinate (N. Dutta, *Early Manastic Buddhism*, pp. 292-3).

From the foregoing discussion, we can conclude that according to the Buddha and his followers, *nirvāṇa* is certainly a positive reality, whatever its real nature might be ; it is never a negative state. Not only that, the Buddha declares it to be the Ultimate Reality—uncompounded and uncaused—forming the ground of the universe. He thus says, "There is, Ye Monks, something not born, not due to causes, not made, not produced by creative activity......because, Ye Monks, there is something not born, not due to causes, not made, not produced by creative activity, a getting out of the born, the due to causes, the made, the produced by crative activity may be found". Again, he says "There is, Ye Monks that realm where there is neither the realm of infinite space, nor the realm of infinite consciousness, nor the realm nothingness. This, Ye Monks, I call neither coming, nor going nor standing nor perishing, nor originating. Without support, without progress, without basis is this, even this is the end of suffering" ("athi ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asamkhātaṁ"—*Udāna*, 8.1.2.). All this indicates that, to the Buddhists, *nirvāṇa* is the

Absolute and is quite similar to the *nirguṇa* Brahman of the Advaitins.

We may thus conclude with the words of George Grimm that 'the Buddha brought the Vedānta to its utmost perfection ...He is the real Brahmin who has completely realised the ideal of the *Upaniṣads*', and with the words of Swami Vivekananda that 'the Buddha is the *Upaniṣads* incarnate.'

Note-2

(a) All the pro-Vedic schools of Indian philosophy hold that the *Vedas* are *abhrānta* or infalliable, since they are revealed truth. It is said that the *Vedas* have not been composed by any human being ; the sages referred to in the *Vedas* are not composers but seers of truth. Further, it is held that the *Vedas* are *nitya* or eternal i.e. they remain the same for ever and that they are *apauruṣeya* or impersonal i.e. they are not created by any being, human or divine. Though Īśvara or God is said to be the source of the *Vedas*, he is not regarded as the author ; he is said simply to be reproducing them in the beginning of every creation, their form remaining the same.

Against these contentions, we have the following points to say : First of all, we should keep it in mind that the *Vedas* are composed, to use modern philological terminology, in Indo-Aryan language and, for obvious reasons, none can convince us that a text of such a language will reappear in the same form in every creation. Secondly, it cannot be imagined why an independent being like Īśvara should produce the *Vedas* in every creation only in the Indo-Aryan language, ignoring all other languages. Thirdly, in the *Vedas* there are certain expression like Sindhu, Sarasvatī, Himavat etc. having geographical references. We cannot expect that these names should exist in every creation. The acceptance of the re-currence of all these names will imply that the same geographical environments will reappear in every creation. This will ultimately lead to the theory that the whole world is predetermined—a theory which will nullify all possibilities of self-culture. Fourthly, the Indo-Aryan language, like all other languages, is a result of historical and social evolution. We cannot expect that such a language should exist in the same form in every creation. Fifthly, the non-eternality of the *Vedas* is clear from the very fact that out of the thousand branches of the Vedas, only one branch is now in existence.

It is, however, to be noted that in the *Vedas* there are two aspects—one is *śābdika* or linguistic ; the other, *tāttvika* or essential. Of them, the linguistic aspect can in no way be regarded as impersonal and eternal. All the arguments put forward above against the impersonalness and eternality of the *Vedas* have got their reference to this linguistic aspect, the agency of which goes to human beings or sages. The essential aspect of the *Vedas* can, however, be regarded as infallible and eternal, for reasons stated below :

A scrutiny of the super-sensuous experiences of the pure-hearted souls of the world reveals that there is a harmony among all these experiences. Opinions of the sages regarding social ideals and suchlike worldly matters may differ, because of the differences and changing circumstances of social, historical, economic and geographical back-ground, but in transcendental matters, there is a uniformity of all the supersensuous experiences of all the sages. Thus, all the sages of all sects of the world agree in holding that the real soul is pure in nature, that God is the ultimate cause or ground of the universe, that the universe is not outside the being of God, and so on. The differences which we find among the experiences of different sages are only apparent, since different experiences simply mark different stages of the sages is their spiritual journey.

Likewise, when we go through the different passages of the *Vedas,* we find that though the sages were separated from one another by centuries, there is a harmony among all the statements made by them. Śaṅkarācārya, in his commentary on the *Brahma-sutra*, has been successful in discovering a *samanvaya* or harmony among all these passages. All this prompts us to accept the truth of the super-sensuous experiences recorded in the *Vedas.* And, what is truth is always impersonal and eternal. Thus, the essential aspect of the *Vedas* revealing the super-sensuous experiences of the sages, may be accepted as self-valid, impersonal and eternal. To add more, this idea of self-validity, impersonal-ness and eternality applies not only to the realisations of the Vedic sages but also to all the super-sensuous experiences of all the sages of the world. And the agency of this aspect can be attributed to the Absolute—Iśvara or Brahman—because it is the Absolute from which all truths emanate. The contention that the *Vedas* are revelation of truth and, for that reason, *svataḥ-pramāṇa* or self-valid, refers, in reality, to this essential aspect, and not to the linguistic one. And, as truth is without any beginning and, for that reason, impersonal and eternal, the essential aspect of the *Vedas*, being revelation of truth, can be regarded as impersonal and eternal. It is a matter of keen interest that Patañjali, the great Grammarian of the second century B. C., while commenting on the dictum 'tena proktam' of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* indicates that while going to discuss the eternality of the Vedas, we should consider both the factors of 'word' and 'meaning'. According to him, the 'meanings' of the Vedas are eternal, while the 'words' composed of earlier and later individual sounds are non-eternal. During dissolution, he holds, the regularity of the position of the sounds of the *Vedas* is destroyed, while the meanings remain the same.

(b) While advocating the validity of the *Vedas*, BV argues that the validity of all the pro-vedic scriptures like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Smṛtis* etc. is also to be accepted. This, in our view, is totally unreasonable. The *Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* contain so many mythical and imaginary elements, the validity of which may be questioned by any person having historical and practical sense. To regard all these elements as valid like the *Vedas* or the *Upaniṣads* is unwarranted. Further, the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy, being *sanātana* or eternal and universal, is suitable to all men of all ages, while the philosophy of the *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas* is not so, as they are concerned at places with some or other social, political or historical facts which are bereft of any everlasting significance. Hence, it is unwise to place all these works on a par with the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*. It is, again, peculiarly noticed that though BV argues in favour of the validity of all the said scriptures, he, in reality, accepts the validity of the Vaiṣṇavite scriptures only and rejects the validity of other scriptures. In all the *Śaiva Purāṇas* and the *Āgamas*, Śiva has been declared as the Supreme Person and Śakti or the Power of Śiva as the Supreme Power or the Universal Mother. BV rejects this view as anti-Vedic and, hence, as worthless. But we cannot do away with the vast Śaiva and Āgamic literatures simply becaus they do not suit to the taste of the Vaiṣṇavas.

A question may here be raised as to which of the scriptures are to be accepted as valid. To this, our clear-cut reply is that it is the *Upaniṣads* that are to be accepted as valid. Unbiased statements of spiritualists having super-sensuous realisations are also valid, but statements of such spiritualists are generally mixed up with some social or cultural aspects which have no universal appeal. The Upanisads, however, being free from such social or cultural aspects, have a universal and everlasting value. That is why thousands of sages of centuries have realised the Absolute and attained unbounded knowledge and bliss by pursuing the doctrines of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas* are also to be regarded as valid so far as they are in harmony with the *Upaniṣads*.

As against the view of the Vaiṣṇavas, we are of the firm stand that the Āgamas are also valid, since they are quite in harmony with the *Upaniṣads*. The only thing to be noted is this that, the Personal Absolute spoken of in the *Upaniṣads* has been represented in the Āgamas as Śiva or Kālī or as Śiva-Śakti, while the same has been represented as Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures. For having a correct view of the Āgamic path, a deep and proper study of this branch of literature is required. By having a superficial knowledge from some secondary works, one should not pass any reamark on the Āgamas or the Āgamic path. If some person neglects Śiva or Kālī as ordinary gods, then we shall be bound to assume that he has not meditated upon the real forms of Śiva and the Mother and that he has not tasted their 'unbounded' beauty, an atom of which overfloods the whole universe.

In clear terms, the Absolute may be realised either as Impersonal or as Personal—manifested as Kṛṣṇa or Śiva or Kālī.

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04. Reflexions on Indian Philosophy
05. Nairātmyavāda—The Buddhist Theory of Not-self
06. The Bishnupriya Manipuri Language
07. The Bishnupriya Manipuris — Their Language, Literature and Culture
08. An Etymological Dictionary of Bishnupriya Manipuri
09. Indian Theories of Creation
10. The absolute in Indian Philosophy
11. The Philosophy of Jainism
12. Thoughts on Tantra and Vaiṣṇavism
13. The Self in Indian Philosophy